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THE BELGIC REVOLUTION

OF

1830.

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BY

CHARLES WHITE, Esq.

"The surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire."—BACON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Hla-k-6

VOL. I.

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ERRATA.

Page	Line	
29	2,	*for* Friedland, *read* Friesland.
29	5,	*for* Eme, *read* Elb.
29	6,	*for* Enes, *read* Ems.
31	21,	*for* some, *read* none.
73	17,	*for* hours, *read* years.
76	27,	*for* Maanen, *read* Meenen.
79	2,	*for* persecution, *read* prosecution.
79	2,	*for* d'Ellougne, *read* d'Elhougne.
82	29,	*for* intra, *read* extra.
102	6,	*for* movements, *read* movement.
105	1,	*for* conciliating, *read* conciliatory.
110	Note,	*for* fundamentale, *read* fondamentale.
126	12,	*for* tyrants, *read* tyrans.
128	5,	*for* double, *read* durable.
202	27,	*for* containg, *read* containing.
208	15,	*for* 19th, *read* 9th.
264	34,	*for* Maanen, *read* Meenen.
270	33,	*for* in, *read* into.
276	14,	*for* Meens, *read* Meeus.
292	35,	*for* private, *read* privates.
311	Contents,	*for* provincial, *read* provisional.
317	8,	*for* the Hannibræ, *read* Hannibal.
320	10,	*for* Sylvian, *read* Sylvain.
337	24,	*for* left, *read* right.
11	27,	*for* right, *read* left.
353	33,	*for* provincial, *read* provisional.

PREFACE.

In giving the following volumes to the public, it is a duty I owe myself to offer a few prefatory observations that will, I trust, not only account for many deficiencies, but avert other accusations that might be levelled against me. When I state that I have resided more than four years in Belgium; that I have attentively watched the various phases of the revolution since its outbreaking in August 1830, and lived on terms of amicable intercourse with many of the most eminent personages that have figured on the political horizon; that I have had access to a vast mass of oral and documentary testimony, and have made the subject not only a matter of constant meditation, but of occasional publication;* when I state this, the reader

* The narrative of the Siege of Antwerp, in the *United Service Journal*, No. 52, with divers other articles on the Belgian question, in that and other reviews and public journals.—Note of Editor.

will naturally feel himself entitled to expect much at my hands, and to observe that such a position was the most advantageous a foreigner could desire for obtaining accurate and luminous information.

But, whilst I frankly point out this combination of circumstances, apparently so highly favourable for the purposes of *composition*, it is important for me to show the reverse of the picture, and to declare that many of these very circumstances enhance, rather than obviate, the difficulties of *publication*. For it is as impossible to allude to events in which I may perchance have borne a trifling share, without incurring the imputation of egotism, as it is to give publicity to many details in my possession, without betraying the trust of those who have honoured me with their confidence. It is as difficult to draw aside the veil from various recent occurrences without prematurely exposing names and raking up dormant passions, as it is to speak frankly or impartially of men's conduct without giving umbrage to persons to whom I am indebted, not only for proofs of kindness, but for the very information on which my strictures may be grounded. In short, it is as embarrassing to censure public acts without wounding private feelings, as to mete

out deserved praise without being accused of prejudice, or perhaps something worse.

It was at first my desire to compose, not an ephemeral production, got up for the sole purpose of gratifying party feelings, or serving a specific political purpose, but a history that might have been deemed worthy of outliving the feverish interest of the day: a history at once impartial, accurate, and comprehensive. But I have been deterred from so doing, not only by the foregoing considerations, but by the conviction that events were still too recent to admit of putting forth any serious historical work, as well as by other difficulties, some of which I shall enumerate.

In the first place, whether in Holland or Belgium, men's feelings are still too much excited, and their opinions and prejudices too much biassed, to render it easy to arrive at any dispassionate or impartial conclusion. In Brussels, for instance, King William is held up as a fiscal tyrant, whose reign was a continued series of infractions of the fundamental law; and his ministers are looked on as greedy oppressors, whose only aim was to reduce Belgium to a state of bondage, and to monopolize her wealth and resources for the sole benefit of Holland. At the Hague, King Leopold is designated as an

usurper, and his people as ungrateful rebels, who had not the slightest pretext for throwing off the paternal government of the Nassaus, and who were alone prevented from igniting all Europe in one general jacobinical conflagration, by the firmness of the Dutch monarch, and the devoted loyalty of the old Netherlands. Thus, if a querist attempt to elicit authorities from the Dutch, he will be submerged in a sea of invective, not only levelled against their adversaries, but against the advocates of those liberal principles that are steadily and irresistibly gaining ground throughout all Western Europe; whilst, on the other hand, if a writer consult public opinion in Belgium, he will find himself borne away by a torrent of abuse, not only aimed against the Dutch, but against all those who venture to question the extent of the Belgian grievances, or to express an opinion that during *a certain period*, the selection of the Prince of Orange was not incompatible with the interests, welfare, and independence of the nation.

Secondly,—The negotiations being still incomplete, and the issue of the question still undecided, it is impossible to obtain various official documents necessary for the explanation of past occurrences, and, above all, to the completion of a regular connected history. Nay, even

admitting that access may be had to such documents, their publication at the present moment would be premature, and could not obtain the sanction of the diplomatists engaged in the negotiation, unless they were printed in a mutilated state.

These, *then*, and other circumstances of a *personal nature*, have determined me to abandon the project of compiling a history; but being unwilling to throw away the labour and research of many months, I have resolved to confine myself to a cursory narrative of general events.

Fully alive to the delicacy of my position, it has been my earnest study to maintain moderation and impartiality. At the same time, I have not hesitated to advance my opinions with freedom, and to laud and censure without regard to party or country. To those whom my praise of men or measures may appear exaggerated or ill-founded, I have only to say that, although erroneous, they proceed from *conviction*. To those who may cavil at my strictures, I have only to observe, that I utterly disclaim all intention of *personality*, and have levelled my remarks against such proceedings only, as may be considered public property, or falling within the immediate domain of history.

Some there are, who will doubtless be of-

fended with my criticism, and others dissatisfied with my praise. For this I can offer no remedy, and must consequently submit to the fate that awaits all contemporaneous writers, especially such as undertake to discuss men's conduct during civil commotions. For, as Cowley in one of his essays justly observes,—"In all civil wars, men are so far from stating the quarrel against their country, that they do it against a person or party which they really believe or pretend to be pernicious to it."

Such appears to have been the spirit that has presided at the composition of almost all the pamphlets or works that have been published by both parties, on the subject of the revolution. For, if one excepts the valuable productions of Mr. Nothomb, Count Hooggendorp, and Baron de Keverberg, with those attributed to Mr. Van de Weyer, and one or two others of minor note, the pages of the rest are but a tissue of personalities and scurrilous diatribes, directed against men and not against measures, tending to obscure rather than enlighten, and being, in fact, mere vehicles for venting individual animosities, and gratifying national or party hatreds.

THE BELGIC REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

BELGIUM—ITS NAME AND NATIONALITY EFFACED BY SUCCESSIVE CONQUERORS—ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND STRUGGLES FOR LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE—ITS PROSPERITY UNDER MARIA THERESA—JOSEPH II. ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE TOLERANCE AND REFORM IN CHURCH AND STATE—DISCONTENT OF CLERGY AND LAITY—RIOTS EXCITED BY VANDERNOOT'S MEMOIR—THE AUSTRIANS DRIVEN FROM BELGIUM—THE INDEPENDENCE OF BRABANT PROCLAIMED—JOSEPH DEPOSED—HIS DEATH—ACCESSION OF LEOPOLD—BELGIANS DEFEATED—CONVENTION OF THE HAGUE—RESTORATION OF AUSTRIAN DOMINION—DEATH OF LEOPOLD—ACCESSION OF FRANCIS I.—GENERAL WAR—THE FRENCH DEFEAT THE ALLIES, OVERRUN BELGIUM, AND ANNEX IT TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

ALTHOUGH the name of Belgium is coeval with the most interesting period of R[illegible] history, and connected with some of the most glorious achievements of the imperial legions, the various political mutations and subdivisions to which that country was subjected, its frequent passage from the dominion of one ruler to another, its continued yet ever-varying state of vassalage during eighteen centuries, from the time of Cæsar to the moment of its last revolution, not only annihilated its independence as a nation, but went far to rob it of a name, whose remote antiquity merges in the night of time.

Indeed, from the period of its passing under the sway of the house of Austria, to that of its conquest by the French republic, and subsequent incorporation with Holland, every effort appears to have been employed, not only to destroy all vestiges of nationality, but even to avoid all recurrence to its ancient appellation. Thus, on referring to the various treaties concluded during its subjection to Austria or Spain, even to that entitled the "*joyeuse entrée*," we find it constantly denominated as the Low Countries, Spanish, or Austrian Netherlands.* Again, during its junction with France, it was only known as forming an integral part of the French empire: whilst, from the period of its union with Holland, it was confounded with the old Netherlands, and designated, both in the fundamental law, and in all public acts, as "the Southern Provinces."†

In short, it seems to have been the study of its successive masters not only to enfeeble that unity of spirit and homogenity of character which constitute the great mainsprings of patriotism, but to obliterate that which, next to a man's domestic hearth, must be ever dearest to his feelings—his country's name. To such extremes was this system carried by the Dutch government, that an attempt was made by them even to impose their language on the Belgians, thus to compel the majority to abandon the prevalent idiom of their country, and to

* The "*joyeuse entrée*" consisted of a collection of fifty-nine articles, some dating as early as the thirteenth century, and guaranteeing certain privileges which the Austrian monarchs swore to maintain at the moment of their inauguration. These articles were renewed and accorded to the states of Brabant and Limbourg by Maria Theresa, and sworn to by the Duke Charles of Lorraine, then Governor of the Low Countries, on the 20th April, 1744.

† The "fundamental law," often recurred to in the course of this work, was the constitution or charter of the kingdom of the Netherlands, consisting of 234 articles, with three additional.

adopt the dialect of the minority, to whom they had been forcibly wedded, but with whom they were not susceptible of cordial political union, and still less of vernacular amalgamation. But, with all this, "Spain never could succeed in rendering the Belgians Spanish, nor could Austria convert them into Austrians, nor France metamorphose them into French, nor Holland transform them into Dutch."* History has shown them revolting against Spain, rebelling against Austria, rejoicing in their liberation from the iron rule of Napoleon, and emancipating themselves from their subjection to Holland. It may be affirmed that, from the period of their union with the kingdom of Lorraine down to that of their incorporation with Holland, each mutation has but added to their antipathies, and estranged them still further from foreign dominion.

The result of this perpetual obliteration of the Belgian name, was, that at length the Belgians were not only confounded with their rulers, but, of late years, their origin and history were lost sight of: so that, when the revolution burst forth, men were inclined to ask who were the Belgians? and to demand what were their titles, not only to nationality and independence, but even to a distinct appellation. It was argued, as they had never constituted an independent power, that they had no pretence to political existence, or to attempt to regain that freedom and individuality which had been the dowry of their forefathers—a dowry only wrested from them by the superior military science and discipline of the Roman cohorts. It was asserted, as they had been divided under the kings of France and Lorraine, the Dukes of Burgundy and Brabant, the Counts of Flanders, Namur, and Louvain: now tributary to

* Essai, Historique et Politique, sur la Revolution Belge. Par Nothomb. Brussels, 1833.

Austria, and now to Spain; then incorporated with the French empire, and then united to Holland, that they had forfeited all title to reassume that independent existence, which overwhelming force, as well as the mediterranean character of their geographical position, alone prevented their seizing and maintaining at an earlier period. In short, the annals of Belgium present a remarkable feature; for, "the first historical notice one meets with of this people, is the relation of their downfall; it was, in fact, from their conquerors that they received a political existence."*

Ancient Belgium, according to Cæsar, was composed of twenty-four powerful and warlike nations, occupying the whole of the countries, situated between the North-Sea, and the rivers Seine and Marne, and forming a third part of Gaul.† Its surface was covered with dense and extensive forests, of which those of Soignes, the Ardennes, and the woody portions of the Flanders are remnants. The population composing the different tribes or nations were principally of Trans-Rhenan origin, and were fragments of those northern hordes that, at different periods, overrun all western Europe, carrying with them their language, constitutions, and customs.‡ They were remarkable, according to old historians, for the qualities that characterized the Teutonic race, being courageous, hospitable, and valiant: indeed so distinguished were they for their valour, as to elicit from Cæsar the following panegyric: "Horum omnium (the Gauls) fortissimi sunt Belgæ." The Batavian cavalry was also cited by Tacitus as remarkable for its courage, and, like the Swiss of later times, formed during several centuries the body-guard of the Roman

* Schiller, Geschichte des abfalls der vereinigten, Niederländen.
† Cæsar, de Bell. Gall. Lib. I.
‡ Tacitus, de Mori "Germ." Lib. IV.

emperors. Lucan and other authors make honourable mention of the military prowess of the Belgian troops in Greece, Egypt, Spain, and Italy; and, according to Florus, the victory gained by Cæsar at Pharsalia was in a great measure attributed to the distinguished conduct of six Belgian cohorts. This reputation for personal courage was subsequently most honourably sustained by the Wallons in the Spanish service; by the splendid cavalry known, under the Duke of Alba, as the "*Milice d'Ordonnance*;" by the Flemings, in the pay of the Italian States; and by the Belgian conscripts, embodied in Napoleon's armies, where they were not considered inferior to the French soldiers.

On the other hand, they are reported, by the same authorities, to have possessed many of the vices peculiar to their progenitors, being addicted to drinking, gambling, broils, and party feuds. Indeed their history, for a lapse of ages, presents such a continual series of intestine turmoils and rebellions, especially in the Flanders, as prove this accusation of a jealous and troublesome spirit to have been well founded. But, before we brand a people with a taint of this nature, it is proper to look into their internal condition, and the conduct of their governments: if this be done, our reprobation of the constant outbreakings of the Belgians will be much diminished. They were the first people who struggled to burst asunder the bonds of vassalage and feudal degradation in which they were held by their rulers; the first to raise the banner of liberty against the infamous exactions and oppression of Spain and the Inquisition; in short, the first who drew the sword to reconquer that freedom, the seeds of which had been planted on their soil prior to their submission to the Roman yoke.

The history of the Netherlands, embodying that of

the Belgic provinces, has been so often and so ably treated, as to render it unnecessary to retrace the beaten track. We shall, therefore, take our point of departure from the reign of Joseph II., under whose government the craving of the Belgians for independence and nationality first demonstrated itself by an overt outbreaking, which may be considered as the elder sister of the recent revolution, and consequently immediately connected with our subject.

On the 28th of October, 1740, the Emperor Charles VI., last male heir of the house of Austria, died at Vienna; leaving his crown to his eldest daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, who ascended the throne in virtue of the famous pragmatic sanction of 1713.* But the Elector of Bavaria having enlisted Prussia and France in his favour, laid claim to the imperial diadem, as nearest male heir, and was elected emperor in 1742, under the style of Charles VII.

Scarcely had the young empress assumed the reins of government ere she was assailed by a host of foes, who, under the pretext of supporting the Elector of Bavaria, attacked the Austrian possessions on every side. This prince, driven from his hereditary states, and possessing nothing of an empire but the empty title, died in 1745, overwhelmed with grief and disappointment. Upon his demise, his son Maximilian renounced all pretensions to the imperial succession; and Maria Theresa, therefore, placed the sceptre in the

* "The pragmatic sanction," was the celebrated convention promulgated by Charles VI. at Vienna on the 19th of April, 1713. Its principal feature was the stipulation that, in default of male issue, the succession of the house of Austria should devolve on the females and their descendants, according to the right of primogeniture. This convention was ratified and guaranteed by the different powers of Europe.—*Mem. Hist. et Pol. des Pays Bas.*

hands of her husband, who was elected emperor, under the name of Francis the First.

Charles of Lorraine having espoused the Archduchess Mary Anne, was associated with her in the government of the Belgic provinces, where they were inaugurated in 1744; but war breaking out immediately after, he was called to the command of the imperial troops in Germany. Hostilities commenced in May, and the French having thrown a body of nearly 100,000 men into the Flanders; in a short time, Menin, Ypres, Furnes, and other barrier fortresses, fell into the hands of Louis XV.; whilst the allied armies, composed of English, Dutch, and Austrians, commanded by Marshal Feuillade, the Duke of Aremberg, and Count Nassau, gave way on all sides, and fell back into a position between Ghent and Audenarde.

The further progress of the French was, however, speedily arrested by a skilful, stratagetical movement of the Duke of Lorraine, who, rapidly advancing on the Rhine, crossed that river, and penetrated into Alsace; thus compelling Marshal Saxe to withdraw the greater part of his forces from the Low Countries. The allied armies being reinforced by 20,000 men, now commenced offensive operations, and advancing into French Flanders, menaced Lille; but the want of cordiality and skill among the allied generals reduced their movements to mere demonstrations.

The campaigns of 1745 and the following year were by no means favourable to the Empress's arms. The latter was rendered memorable by the battle of Fontenoy, by which the whole of the Flanders, and the greater part of Hainault and Brabant, with the city of of Brussels, fell into the hands of the French; and Louis XV, who nominally commanded in person, pursued his successes to the gates of Antwerp, which, with

the citadel, shortly yielded to his arms. At length, after a succession of campaigns, alike advantageous to France and glorious to Marshal Saxe, a peace was signed by the eight belligerent powers at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 18th of October, 1748; and thus terminated that famous war, which, during seven years, had desolated the greater part of continental Europe.

The leading conditions of the treaty of Westphalia, as well as of all other most important treaties concluded since 1648, were again renewed, and the whole of the Belgic provinces restored to the empress; but without ameliorating their condition, or obviating any of the obnoxious clauses as regarded Holland. At the same time, the different contracting powers again guaranteed the pragmatic sanction, and thus formally recognized the immutable rights of Maria Theresa.

From this period, to the death of that princess in 1780, Belgium enjoyed a state of profound repose. Agriculture revived and prospered; commerce, though crippled by the Munster and barrier treaties, was regenerated, industry protected, and the arts and sciences warmly encouraged; whilst the resources and internal economy of the country presented a picture of great prosperity. In short, to adopt the language of an historian, "their condition at this period might be resumed in a few words—they were happy and contented."

But this fortunate calm was troubled soon after the accession of Joseph II, one of the first acts of whose reign, however, was the exaction from Holland of the evacuation of all the barrier towns, and a fruitless endeavour to obtain the opening of the Scheldt. This monarch, who had made the theory of government his principal study, had long been convinced of the evils arising from the intolerance of the church, from the want of union in the system of administration, from the multiplicity of

monasteries and church festivals, and the diversity of provincial laws and local privileges—all tending to create abuses, and to destroy that unity and vigour of action, so essential to the legislative welfare of a state.

The constitution of Charles V., remodelled by Philip of Anjou, had been again amended by the Emperor Charles VI. But the alterations introduced by the latter were a mere revival of the old constitution, with a few modifications rendered necessary by the gradual progress of civilization. This constitution, religiously observed during the reign of Maria Theresa, had long been considered extremely defective by Joseph II., and, although upon his accession he swore to the "*joyeuse entrée*," and pledged himself to maintain the ancient forms of administration, he secretly resolved to adopt various reforms, and to establish a more uniform and connected system of internal economy. The principles upon which Joseph acted were, doubtless, philosophic and enlightened; but the error he committed was in attacking, too suddenly, a host of abuses that had not become rotten, but petrified by age, and, consequently, required gradually softening, rather than being rent asunder by any sudden or despotic effort.

Being tolerant himself, and willing to promote tolerance throughout his dominions, being impressed with the abuses existing in the over-numerous monasteries, and the disadvantages of an excess of religious festivals and processions, Joseph II. attempted to propagate the one, to suppress some of the second, and to diminish the numbers of the third; especially the parochial feasts called "*Kermesses*, or *Dedicases*,"* which were prolonged several days, engendering idleness, drunkenness and pro-

* *Kermesses*, from Kirk-messe: *Dedicases*, from its being dedicated to the patron saint.

fligacy; and, by greatly curtailing the time of labour, thus deprived the families of the labouring classes of at least one-fourth of their annual means of support.

Several edicts, tending to effect this object, were successively promulgated, and caused universal discontent, especially amongst the Catholic hierarchy. Indeed, when the Archduchess Maria Christina and Duke Albert (governors-general) addressed a rescript to the university of Louvain, enjoining the admission of Protestants to civil functions, and declaring that, "although the emperor was firmly resolved to maintain and protect the Catholic religion, his majesty, nevertheless, deemed it consistent with Christian charity to extend civil tolerance to the Protestants, whom he could consider in no other light than that of citizens, without regard to their faith," the following curious answer was returned:—"Tolerance would be the source of dissensions, hatreds, and interminable discord; *because the Catholic religion regards all heretics, without distinction, as victims devoted to eternal perdition.*—This is the maxim, that the Catholic religion impresses on her children, as an essential dogma, and invariable article of their faith."*

These, and other proposed reforms, were promulgated by two diplomas, emanating from Vienna in January, 1787, and are highly interesting, since they caused that general sedition, which, gradually ripening into overt revolt, passed through all the various phases of revolution, even to the deposition of the sovereign; until, at last, after a few months of unprofitable rebellion, disgraced by the most violent and wanton excesses, it terminated in submission and restoration.

The most striking features of the proposed innovations were, first, the abolition of the three "collateral" councils,

* Dewez, Histoire Générale de la Belgique.

and their consolidation in one council of state, presided by the first minister;* secondly, the division of the provinces into nine circles; each governed by an intendant, and subdivided into districts; each having its commissary charged with the political and civil administration; thirdly, the abrogation of all petty, seigneurial, and ecclesiastical tribunals, and the establishment of a court of justice or assize for each province, with one central or high court of appeal at Brussels; fourthly, the abrogation of the torture, and the submission of the secular and regular ecclesiastics to the ordinary judges; fifthly, the suppression of some of the convents, and the foundation of a general seminary for the uniform education of the clergy.

It is difficult to discover any thing in these propositions that might not have been hailed with satisfaction by an enlightened people, or a clergy less jealous of its overwhelming influence; but the effect produced on the public mind was diametrically opposed both to the views of the sovereign and to common reason.

The celebrated Vandernoot now first appeared on the political horizon, and rendered himself conspicuous by the publication of a memoir, setting forth the rights and privileges of the Belgic people, and denouncing as "*traitors to their country*" the intendants, and all such persons as accepted office under the new mode of administration. This famous memoir, approved of by the States, produced an extraordinary sensation throughout the country, and probably led to those popular commotions and outrages which immediately ensued at Namur and other towns.

The government, acting on a vacillating system of

* These "collateral" councils were established by Charles V., and were so designated from the counsellors being *ad latus principis*.

policy, devoid of consistency or energy, attempted to temporize; and, by suspending the execution of some reforms, hoped to obtain the recognition of others. But their expectations were deceived; for the malcontents, finding they had obtained these concessions, were determined to exact the repeal of all the imperial edicts, and the re-establishment of the ancient form of administration, in strict conformity with the constitution of 1531, and the "*joyeuse entrée.*"

The governors-general, finding all remonstrance vain, and hoping to avert the gathering storm, judged it most prudent to submit. They, therefore, not only consented to the restoration of the constitution to its ancient form, but to the dismissal from their councils of all persons obnoxious to, or even *suspected* by, the people. This intelligence was published at Brussels on the 31st of May, 1787, and was celebrated with the most extravagant manifestation of public joy.

But the seeds of disaffection having once borne fruit, were not to be eradicated even by this triumph. Secret meetings were held, associations were formed, and the national cockade was openly worn. Volunteers enrolled themselves, and banners were carried through the streets, inscribed with inflammatory devices; whilst the name of Royalist or Intendant, adopted to denote such persons as were attached to the emperor, was a sufficient motive for proscription, and subjected the unfortunate individual so designated to insult, pillage, and even loss of life. In short, it was evident, although the States, clergy, and authorities, openly professed their inviolable attachment to the emperor, that it was their secret intention to endeavour to throw off the Austrian yoke.

It was not so much the real infractions made by the emperor in the constitution that irritated the people, as the malignant and exaggerated reports spread abroad by

designing persons. The vast mass of citizens, especially those of the lower orders in every country, are, generally speaking, indifferent to the form of government by which they are ruled, and of which they neither comprehend the meaning or object. They only judge of its purity or efficacy by the degree of personal liberty they enjoy, or from the immediate action of such taxes as press on the necessaries and conveniencies of life. Such was the case in Belgium; where the people, naturally sluggish and quietly-disposed, required more than ordinary excitement to arouse them. The leaders were, therefore, obliged to have recourse to the falsest insinuations to stimulate the masses, and to inflame the public mind. Thus, the emperor was represented as a tyrant, whose intention it was to introduce military conscription, to charge all commercial, industrial, and agricultural produce with a tax of 40. per cent.; to abolish the ordinary tribunals, and substitute in their place the despotic jurisdiction of the Intendants; to introduce heterodox doctrines into the church, in order to sap the foundation of the true faith; and, lastly, it was affirmed that an army of 50,000 Austrians was preparing to pour into the country to support these odious measures.

These sinister reports, artfully concocted by the laics, were industriously circulated by the clergy, who did not scruple to accuse Joseph of heresy as well as despotism. Such was the skill of the intriguers, that at length *church* and *liberty*, *religion* and *constitution* were blended together in men's minds as synonymous terms, and all attempts at reforming the one were looked upon as sacrilegious attacks upon the other. A dispatch, addressed by the emperor to Prince Kaunitz, who had replaced Maria Christina and Albert in the government, put the finishing stroke to the rebellion. This document, repealing the concessions made to the people, and peremp-

torily ordering the immediate execution of the edicts, produced a serious riot. On the 22d Jan., 1788, Count d'Alton, who had been named general-in-chief, having found it necessary to call out the military, the soldiers were insulted and maltreated by the populace, and being compelled to repel force by force, for the first time shed civic blood.

Vandernoot, who was one of the most prominent actors in all recent events, and had obtained universal popularity, was ordered to be arrested; but he made his escape to England, where he was deluded with hopes of assistance. Thence passing into Holland, under the title of "Agent Plenipotentiary of the Brabant Nation," he was received by the Princess of Orange, who amused him with similar assurances. From the Hague, Vandernoot proceeded to Berlin, where, on the recommendation of the Princess of Orange, he obtained an audience of the prime-minister, who, on this occasion, is reported to have made a remark extremely applicable to more than one of those persons who have borne a prominent share in the late revolution. "Vandernoot," said the minister, "is a man who is evidently impelled by a spirit of vengeance rather than by the love of good. The primary impulse with him is ambition, not patriotism; and he is infinitely better versed in the chicanery of the laws than in the mysteries of politics."

In the mean while Vandernoot's colleagues, Vonck, Van Eupen, and others, aided by the abbés of Tongerloo, St. Bernard, and the principal clergy, had established a secret society, termed "*pro aris et focis*," the object of which was to found a regular revolutionary committee; a section of which should retire into Holland, and there organize an army, composed of emigrants and volunteers. This army, of which Colonel

Vandermersch was appointed commander, was assembled on the frontier early in October 1789, and commenced active operations on the 24th of that month, a day rendered memorable by the publication of the celebrated manifesto, by which Joseph II. was declared deposed from the Brabant sovereignty.

The patriot troops, not exceeding 2,500 effectives, with six guns, were divided into two columns; the one under Vandermersch, and the other under Colonel Lorangeois, entered Belgium by Groot Zundert, and Hoogstraaten. And such was the weakness of the government, the feebleness of the Austrian garrisons, the want of skill of the commanders, and the discouragement of the troops, that in less than two months Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, and Antwerp opened their gates to the patriots, the imperial authorities and forces were driven from Brussels, and the Brabançon independence proclaimed.

The liberation of Brabant was followed by that of Flanders, Hainault, Gueldres, and Limbourg. On the 7th of January, 1790, deputies from the states of these provinces assembled at Brussels, and there signed a federative treaty, consisting of twelve articles, declaring, 1st, the constitution of a confederation, under the title of the "*United Belgic Provinces;*" 2d, the establishment of a national federative congress, empowered to appoint ministers, to declare peace or war, and to coin money; in short, resuming all the powers of a constitutional government. At the same time, each province preserved its local administration, rights, privileges, and independence, in all matters not immediately concerning the general welfare.

But the fallacy of this Utopian system was not long in discovering itself. Discords, jealousies, and dissensions broke out between the provinces and the revolutionary leaders. The political ignorance and inexpe-

rience of the members of government was only equalled by the want of skill of the commanders. The avowed democratic principles of some alarmed others, and the want of unity in every branch of the state paralyzed the march of government, and neutralized the successes of the patriots in the field. Anarchy was rife throughout the land; distrust and confusion reigned in every department; whilst the vilest scenes of outrage were perpetrated in all the principal towns, without the authorities having the power, or even the will, to control the multitude. This state of affairs continued up to the death of Joseph II., on the 20th of February, 1790.

The accession of Leopold II. was followed by an ineffectual attempt at reconciliation on the part of the cabinet of Vienna; but the successes gained by the Austrian troops over the Belgian general, Schoenfeld; the want of accord between Vandernoot, Vaneupen, and Vonck; the secession of the Dukes of Ursel, d'Ahremberg, the Count de la Mark, and other distinguished noblemen from the patriot cause, combined with the pressing mediation of England, Holland, and Prussia, at length induced the States to listen to terms of accommodation. The negociation at first proceeded slowly; but the three mediating powers having addressed a second energetic and menacing note, attended by the publication of an imperial manifesto, and Marshal Binder having reduced Namur, Louvain, Brussels, Malines, and Antwerp, the States dispatched deputies to the Hague, and on the 1st of December a convention was signed, by which Belgium obtained a restoration of her constitution and "*joyeuse entrée*", and once more submitted to Austrian dominion.

Thus terminated a revolution that may be said to have been devoid of all the characteristics that could ennoble a popular struggle; for it is not too much to

affirm that it had its foundation, not in the violation of the constitution, not in the oppression of the government, but in the interested ambition of a few pseudo patriots, and the intolerance of a jealous priesthood. Its primary object was not to insure national independence, the reform of evils, and the extension of liberty to the lower orders, but to secure the confirmation of a mass of local laws, traditional privileges, and ecclesiastical abuses, the barbarous fruits of the middle ages.

Under the pretext of being carried on "*pro aris et focis*," it was opposed to all those liberal principles which are now become a necessary and inherent portion of man's existence. It presented the remarkable anomaly of a philosophic yet absolute emperor endeavouring to inculcate tolerance, to introduce reforms, to purify the march of government, to simplify the process of justice, and to give strength and unity to the machinery of the state; whilst his people, led on by designing men, were spilling their blood in order to perpetuate those civil and religious abuses that are now scoffed at by their more enlightened descendants. It may be affirmed that were the offer now made to restore Belgium to its pristine state, as under Maria Theresa, the whole country would rise in arms, and even the very priests would vote against it.

One inference may, however, be drawn from thi struggle; namely, that the subsequent reunion with France *was anti-national.* For is it possible that the same men who drew the sword in 1790 for the restitution of secular privileges and church abuses, should, three years later, have ardently desired a measure that went to annihilate all that they then sought so jealously to maintain? If, as it has been generally admitted, this revolution was exclusively of a religious character, it is too paradoxical to argue that the union with the

French republic was accordant to the general views of the people. No! the annexation to France was as coercive as that with Holland

It has been attempted to assimilate the revolution of 1789 with that of 1830; that is, to attribute both to the same religious jealousies. There can be no doubt that religion, or, in other words, Catholicism, formed an essential ingredient in both; but its operations were nevertheless essentially different. In the one, the clergy, utterly regardless of popular liberties, urged on the people to rebellion in order to maintain a multitude of ecclesiastical abuses; whilst, in the other, they have been amongst the foremost to support liberal principles without being altogether unmindful of their own interests.

Joseph II. found that religion had so completely invaded the state, that it was high time the latter should make an effort to retaliate on the church, and in this he judged rightly; for, unless it be in Mahomedan countries, the state is not in religion, but religion in the state. Invasion—and there certainly was encroachment—proved aggression; and this merited repulse, if not reprisal. He may have erred in the application of the remedy, but he was right in the principle. The Emperor was accused of carrying his philosophic principles to the extremes of heterodoxy. But his most active detractors were the ministers of the church, who declared tolerance to be anti-doctrinal, and who could support no competitors in that monopoly which they deprecated in others, though they ardently sought to maintain it for themselves.

The great misfortune attending the projects of Joseph II. was that this enlightened and philosophic monarch lived half a century too soon. Had his reign followed, instead of preceded, that of Napoleon, it is

more than probable that Austria would now rank amongst constitutional monarchies.

In the revolution of 1830, the position of the two parties was completely reversed, for the encroachments were entirely on the side of the state. The philosophy of the government was Gomerian rather than Voltarian; it was proselytizing instead of tolerant. It tended to restrict, not to emancipate; and this was rendered still more obnoxious, since it emanated from those who professed a different creed.

Had the Belgians of 1830 no fairer grounds for their rebellion than those of 1789, the disfavour cast upon them, and the prejudices excited against their cause, would have been justly merited.

Independent of a general amnesty, the re-establishment of the three "collateral" councils, and the ancient system of provincial and judicial administration, one of Leopold's first acts was the revocation of all edicts of his predecessor that trenched on the immunities of the church. But the flames of sedition and disaffection, doubtless combined with a partial craving after independence and nationality, still smouldered beneath an appearance of submission, and, during the short reign of this monarch, were perpetually breaking out in remonstrances and tumults, which frequently required the most energetic repressive measures on the part of the government.

But that awful tempest which was about to pour down upon devoted Europe, soon burst forth, and developed itself in a manner little anticipated either by the Austrian monarch, or the Belgian people.

The Emperor Leopold II., dying on the 1st of March, 1792, was succeeded by his son, Francis II., then in his twenty-ninth year; who had scarcely assumed the reins of government, ere he was hurried into war with France.

The famous decree of the National Assembly of the 20th of April, being followed by immediate hostilities, two French columns, debouching from Lille and Valenciennes, penetrated, the one into Flanders, under Luckner, and the other into Hainault, under Dumourier. After gaining the victory of Jemappe, the latter pushed forward upon Liege, where he entered triumphantly on the 28th; whilst a detachment under Miranda, rapidly traversing Brussels and Malines, invested the citadel of Antwerp, which capitulated, after a few hours open trenches. Namur likewise surrendered to General Valence; and thus, in the space of a few days, the Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, and the provinces of Namur and Liege submitted to the French arms.

Scarcely had the Austrian troops retired, ere the animosity of the people to that nation openly manifested itself. Assemblies were convoked in all the principal towns, and deputies were dispatched to the convention, declaring that they had renounced all allegiance to Austria, and beseeching the Republic not to treat with any of the European powers, until the latter had recognized the independence of Belgium. But the conquest of that country, and its annexion to France, not its liberation, formed the secret basis of French policy. The deputies were therefore cajoled with specious assurances of fraternity and protection, whilst the convention were drawing up their famous decree of the 15th December, which declared the powers of the French republic to be "*revolutionary, coactive*, and *coercitive*."

This celebrated document was no sooner promulgated, than the eyes of the sane part of the Belgian nation were opened to the fate that awaited them, and other deputations were instantly sent to Paris, charged to remonstrate against the extension of the decree to their country. But the convention could not be diverted from its

views of conquest, and in lieu of complying with the reclamations of the deputies, the Belgian provinces were divided into arrondissements, to each of which French commissaires were appointed, with injunctions to prepare the people for the immediate union of Belgium with France.

This measure was ostensibly grounded on the demand of a few popular or revolutionary societies, established in each of the large towns, under the auspices of French agents. These societies, acting against the wishes of the great majority of the nation, sent deputations to the convention to demand the union; and, in the sitting of the 31st of January, 1793, Danton artfully availing himself of the presence of a deputation from Liege, exclaimed, "I do not trust to mere enthusiasm, all my confidence reposes in *reason*. It is not in my name, but in that of the whole Belgian people, that I demand their reunion with France."

In order to captivate the good will of the lower orders, and further to inflame the public mind, it was decreed in the same sitting, that, wherever the French arms had penetrated, the people should assemble to determine *freely* upon the form of government they chose to adopt. This farce had the desired effect; for the inhabitants of the different towns having met either in the churches or town-halls, the union was voted under the terror of bands of Jacobins, who openly menaced all those who ventured to oppose the measure. The *procès verbaux*, or reports of these resolutions were then forwarded to the convention, which successively decreed the reunion of each town to France, "in conformity," as it was declared, "with the ardent vows of the Belgian people." Some idea may be formed of the truth of this averment by Dumourier's letter to the convention, dated 12th of March, 1793, in which he boldly states "that

the mass of the nation was opposed to a union, and that these 'vows' were only to be torn from them at the point of the sword."

But ere this project could be consummated, the Austrian troops, under the Prince of Cobourg, being strongly reinforced, resumed the offensive, and having gained the battle of Nerwinde, drove the French from Louvain, Namur, Antwerp, Ghent, and Mons. On the 23rd of March, Count Metternich arrived at Brussels, and was reinstated minister; and on the 28th, the Archduke Charles made his solemn entry as governor-general. In the meanwhile the French armies being beaten at all points, once more evacuated the whole Belgic territory, and the Austrian authority was again re-established.

The disastrous campaign of 1793 and 1794, the conduct of which, on the part of the allies, is clouded by a mystery that can only be accounted for by an utter want of ability and unity between some of the commanders, and an absence of integrity in others, soon reversed all their successes, and turned the scale of victory in favour of France. With the view of animating his army, and conciliating the Belgians, the emperor had hastened to Brussels, and taken the field in person; but the allied forces under Clerfayt and the Duke of York, having met with a succession of disasters, and lost the sanguinary battle of Tournay, where Francis II. eminently distinguished himself by his undaunted courage, his Imperial Majesty quitted the head-quarters, and returned to Vienna.

Filled with ardour and enthusiasm, the French rapidly followed up their successes, and, having concentrated their masses, gained the signal victory of Fleurus. Then sweeping like a torrent through the country, they drove the allies from the Netherlands, and in a few days, planted their victorious banners upon all the Belgian cities.

These conquests produced the establishment of revolutionary committees in all the towns, on the basis of the Jacobinical associations of Paris, which, acting under the immediate influence of the French, were not long in pronouncing the "solemn desire" of being united to the republic. Commissaires were therefore immediately sent from Paris, instructed, as a preliminary measure, to divide the provinces into quarters, districts, and cantons; to introduce the French forms of municipal and judicial administration, and to establish trial by jury. These preparatory measures were followed, in July, by the declaration of the liberty of the Scheldt, which had been closed since the treaty of Munster, in 1648, and on the 14th Fructidor (September), Belgium received its new general organization, and was divided into nine departments, assimilated in every respect, as to their internal economy, to those of France.

These arrangements being concluded, the republican government entirely threw off the mask, and the question of definitive union was formally laid before the convention, on the 8th Vendémiaire (October), An. 4. After two days' discussion, in which Armand, Lesage, and other members, warmly opposed the measure, as fraught with every disadvantage to Belgium, and contrary to the views and sentiments of all the sane part of the nation—whilst Carnot, and Merlin of Douai, argued in its favour—it was at length carried affirmatively by a large majority, and was promulgated by a decree, dated 30th September, 1793. From this hour to the commencement of 1814, Belgium continued to form an integral portion of the French empire.

Thus Austria was irrevocably despoiled of that brilliant portion of her splendid empire, whose preservation, during upwards of eighty years, had cost her so much

blood and treasure. Thus the Belgian people, who had rushed into rebellion against the mild rule of a just and tolerant prince, saw themselves plunged from comparative freedom into the most insignificant state of vassalage. Their religious institutions were destroyed, their cherished privileges annihilated, and all those rights and immunities, for which they had manfully struggled during many centuries, were trodden under foot. Their independence was erased; their commerce and industry sacrificed to the political jealousies of their conquerors; their clergy was debased, and their youth carried off to perish, by thousands, in distant climes. Poverty reigned in their cities; want in their villages; and their once splendid capital was converted into a mere provincial town; its palaces deserted, and the grass growing in its streets.

Such were the fruits of the union of Belgium to France; and such, in all probability, in despite of the industry of her people, and the surprising richness of her soil, would again have been her fate, had not the project of the French unionists of 1830 been defeated by the more politic and patriotic exertions of the majority of their fellow-countrymen. Then, indeed, even supposing the union to have been acquiesced in without a general war, we should have seen England, Holland, and all the European powers advocating the closure of the Scheldt, and the revival of that barrier system which the conference of London, and more especially the English cabinet, had determined to prevent.

CHAPTER II.

BELGIUM RECONQUERED BY THE ALLIES—RENOUNCED BY AUSTRIA—PROPOSITION OF THE PRINCE-SOVEREIGN TO ERECT A MARITIME KINGDOM, &c—UNION OF BELGIUM AND HOLLAND—FUNDAMENTAL LAW—VICES OF REPRESENTATION—IMPOLICY OF THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT.

FROM the peace of Campo Formio to the spring of 1814, the Belgic departments continued enchained to the destinies of the French empire. In the meanwhile, the old Netherlanders had already thrown off the French yoke, and having still fresh in their memories the disadvantages of an oligarchic government, recalled from exile the descendant of their ancient stadtholders, whom they raised to the dignity of prince-sovereign.* Belgium, though unable to follow their example, fervently prayed for emancipation; so that, when the numerous hosts of the Holy Alliance poured across the Rhine, and drove back the shattered remnants of Napoleon's valiant armies, the Belgic people hailed with joy the dissolution of an anti-national union, and eagerly looked forward to the foundation of that independence, and the regeneration of those ancient rights and liberties, promised to them and all other nations by the treaties of Reifenbach and

* So devoid of funds were Barons Fagel and Perponcher, deputed to England for this purpose, that the British government was obliged to advance the Prince-Sovereign the sum of £100,000, out of the army extraordinaries, in order to enable him to leave London.

Chaumont, as well as by the various proclamations of the victorious powers.*

The first measures of the allies upon reconquering Belgium, was the establishment of a provisional government, under the direction of the Austrian general, Vincent, who preserved the judicial and administrative forms instituted by France.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that, had the assurances held out by the treaties and proclamations of the allies been acted upon to the letter, Belgium would have been restored to the dominion of Austria, and to all the antiquated privileges and incongruities of the "joyeuse entrée" and the Caroline constitution; a restoration incompatible with the interests of European peace and the real welfare of the Belgic provinces. But the ultimate destinies of this country, and its incorporation with Holland, had already formed the subject of secret negociation at the conference of Chaumont, where the ground-work of the treaties of London, Paris, and Vienna, as regarded the Netherlands, was discussed and determined. All that remained was to obtain the adhesion of the prince-sovereign of the Netherlands.

The renunciation of the Emperor Francis to his ancient Belgic domains was easily obtained, and compensated for by territorial acquisition in Italy. Indeed, the Austrian monarch was no ways loth to abandon a possession, which had been a sanguinary and costly jewel in the hands of his predecessors; and which, by again bringing him into immediate contact with France,

† The first article of the Convention of Reifenbach, signed on the 14th of June, 1813, runs thus:—"The object of the present war is to re-establish the independence of the countries oppressed by France; the high contracting powers (England and Prussia) have consequently bound themselves to direct all their efforts to this object." The treaty of Chaumont, of the 1st of March, 1814, contains stipulations to the same effect.

subjected the whole Austrian empire to be forced into hostilities upon the first dissension that might arise, not only between France and herself, but between the former and any other European power. To this renunciation on the part of Austria, may, in some measure, be attributed the preservation of European peace in 1830; for, supposing Belgium to have belonged to that country at the period of the July revolution, it is not probable that a similar sympathetic movement would have been averted; and as Austria could not have avoided taking up arms to maintain her authority, the result must have been war.

To have united it with Prussia would have given too great a preponderance to that power, and embittered those rankling jealousies and animosities existing between the French and the Prussians—jealousies, that scarcely admit of their coming into juxta-position. It would, moreover, have subjected Prussia to the same hazards of war, that were objected to on the part of Austria, and would have caused the utmost discontent among the Belgic people, who entertained the most exaggerated and unjust notions of Prussian despotism and oppression, and who secretly sighed after nationality, or at least after constitutional institutions.

To divide the Belgic provinces between the neighbouring powers, by giving a part of the Flanders, Antwerp, and Limbourg to Holland; Liege, part of Brabant, Namur and Luxembourg to Prussia, with Hainault and the remainder to France, was incompatible with the assurances of the allied sovereigns, and utterly opposed to the policy of Great Britain, who could not, or ought not at least, to consent to a partition which would bring France to the gates of Antwerp, and terminate in throwing not only all Belgium, but the Rhenish provinces into the arms of that power. If such

partition was dangerous at that time, it would be ten thousand times more perilous at present. For it is indisputable that the dislocation of a part would produce the loss of the whole, and would forthwith realize the project of those French politicians who consider the natural boundaries of France to be the Rhine on the one side, and the ocean on the other.

Europe, moreover, required a barrier against the encroachments of France; and to have restored Belgium to Austria, or to any great power, whose seat of government was far distant, would have neutralized the main object of such barrier, and would have augmented those sources of weakness that are unfortunately inherent to its geographical position.

Nothing, therefore, remained but to erect Belgium into an independent and neutral state, under the sceptre of the Archduke Charles, or of one of the princes of the central houses of Germany, or to unite her with Holland. The first of these plans was found infeasible; the last was therefore adopted.

The theory on which this latter plan was based was eminently politic, and accordant with the safety and interests of Europe; but the execution was clogged with a multitude of difficulties, and was pregnant with many vices and ultimate dangers. Indeed, the prince to whom the Netherlands throne was offered, as if withheld by the presentiment of future evils, is said to have long wavered ere he would accept the Herculean task. In reply to the overtures of the commissioners sent to propose this measure, he presented a counter-project for the erection of Holland into a powerful maritime kingdom, by the means of certain territorial arrangements, admirably advantageous to the Dutch, but utterly inconsistent with the interests of the allies.

This proposition consisted in the cession to Holland

of the left bank of the Scheldt, including Liefkenshoek on the west; of East Friedland, with the duchies of Bremen, and Oldenbourg, and part of Hanover, on the east, and with all the littoral contained between the Scheldt and Eme; thus including the confluences of the Meuse, Rhine, Enes and Weser, and all the great outlets into the ocean, between the French and Danish frontier, and thus subjecting the monopoly of the whole transit commerce of Germany to Holland.

This project scarcely met with a moment's consideration; for the object of the allies, in deviating from their promise "to restore all nations to their former condition," *was not to aggrandize Holland, and still less any particular dynasty.* The reunion of the Netherlands of Charles V. into one kingdom, was a measure strictly and essentially European. A barrier was required; and that barrier could only be obtained by giving such extent and strength to the Netherlands as would convert them into a *tête-de-pont*, sufficiently powerful to resist the first shocks of French ambition. It was for this motive, and this alone, that the British cabinet consented to the advance of those large sums devoted to the erection of the frontier fortresses.*

* By a convention signed on the 13th of August, 1814, Sweden consented to restore Gaudaloupe to France, on condition that, in the event of a union of Holland and Belgium, the former should indemnify her by the sum of one million sterling, to be guaranteed to her by Great Britain. By a second convention, of the same date, between England and the United Provinces, the former restored to the latter Java and all the colonies taken from the Dutch, with the exception of the Cape, Ceylon, and the islands of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. As an equivalent for the three latter, Great Britain undertook to pay the million due from Holland to Sweden; and further to advance two millions sterling, intended to be expended in strengthening the defences of the Netherlands. The total sum to be expended by great Britain was not to exceed three millions sterling.—*Parliamentary Reports.*

The 6th article of the treaty of Paris, of the 30th of May, 1814, if taken in the letter, certainly states that Holland "shall receive an augmentation of territory." This was evidently a vice in the wording of the treaty. It never could be the intention of the Allies, to transfer Belgium to Holland, as *a simple addition*. The whole tenor of the treaty of London and the "act of acceptance" sufficiently prove, that their design was to unite and amalgamate the two countries so as to place them on a footing of absolute equality.

The real object of the great powers has been too much lost sight of in the polemics that have been carried on, especially by those who consider the treaty of the twenty-four articles, of which notice will be taken hereafter, as a direct spoliation of the Dutch, and a violation of the legitimate rights of the Nassau dynasty.

In the first place, the Dutch have not a shadow of pretension to any part of Belgium beyond the few *enclaves*, on the left bank of the Meuse. For these they are offered an equivalent, in nearly the whole of the right bank, and the tongue of land running up between north Brabant and the Meuse on the left. The population of these *enclaves*, known as the "Pays de Généralités," and consisting of 54 townships or villages, did not altogether exceed 58,861 souls; whilst that of the portion of Limbourg ceded by the treaty, including Maestricht, amounts to 175,000. No one then can attempt to assert, that this is not a fair equivalent, or still less that the Dutch can be permitted to revive the barrier system, or to obstruct the Scheldt navigation.

Secondly, it is notorious that the prince-sovereign was not selected, in any way for himself, that is, *quoad* a member of the Nassau family; but because he chanced to be the ruler of the country, to which the allies had resolved to unite Belgium. His acknowledged qualifi-

cations as an able statesman and equitable man, weighed little in the balance; and although there was a strong feeling of regard entertained in England towards his son, the valiant prince who had so nobly distinguished himself beneath the British banner, and whom the English nation already considered as their future king consort, this sentiment did not influence the choice.

It is therefore as erroneous to talk of despoiling the Dutch, as of violating the rights of the king; for his Majesty had no rights either prescriptive, hereditary, or legitimate, save those founded on the treaties that made him king. And what are treaties, but conventions that are only binding so long as they accord with the general welfare? They are certainly not irrevocable either as regards persons or possessions; they are the offspring of necessity, and are for the most part dictated by force; they are subservient to circumstances, and are mutable at the will of those who framed them. The sword carves out a treaty, and the pen merely ratifies it. The history of diplomacy furnishes a thousand proofs of this cancelling and remodelling of treaties, and some more striking than those immediately connected with the Netherlands.

The rights, or rather advantages, derived by the king and his dynasty from the will of the allies, resulted from the force of events; and it is by the counteraction of the same impulses that they have been deprived of a portion of these benefits. The foundation of the Netherlands throne was unhappily of sand. The materials which formed the superstructure were as heterogeneous as those composing the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. Nay, even the very architects that laboured at its construction eventually discovered its vices, and were constrained to sanction its demolition. In short, king William was elevated solely in favour of

European interests, and he has been sacrificed to the same stern necessity.

Certainly, this has not taken place without causing deep regrets. It is not with a willing heart and ready hand that the legislators or people of Europe have sanctioned the infliction of losses on a benevolent monarch, justly beloved by his countrymen and generally respected throughout the world—a king, proverbial for his domestic and public virtues, and so renowned for his equity and intimate knowledge of international law, that distant nations selected him as the arbiter of their differences; and who, whatever may have been the defects of his system, had most indisputably elevated Belgium to a rare degree of commercial splendour and prosperity. Most assuredly it is not in Prussia, Russia, Austria, and still less in England, that either the government or people rejoice at that irresistible combination of events, that have deprived the Prince of Orange of a noble succession, and subjected him to all the penalties resulting from the fatal policy of his father's ministers. But the safety of the great European family demanded the sacrifice, and between an apparent hardship to one dynasty, and the probable destruction of several others, there could be no hesitation.

This hardship, however, has been much exaggerated; it is an hundred-fold less severe than that which has befallen other royal houses. Look to the elder branch of the Bourbons, and above all to the ex-king of Sweden. There, indeed, will be found most affecting examples of human vicissitudes, and the instability of royal grandeur. In the latter, we see the descendant of a long line of kings roaming about the world an almost pennyless outcast; whilst a fortunate soldier of plebeian birth, who rendered very equivocal services to the allies who confirmed his elevation, and who was ostensibly false to

his native country, has obtained tranquil possession of that sceptre, which once struck terror into the hearts of all Europe, when wielded by the great Gustavus and the undaunted Charles.* Nay, more, the king of the Netherlands was compelled to refuse his daughter's hand to the son of this exiled monarch, lest the alliance should give umbrage to Sweden, and clash with the views of other powers.

But to return to the ill-assorted union of Belgium and Holland. The treaty of London, confirmed by those of Vienna and Paris, stipulated that the "*fusion* of the two countries should be intimate and complete;" and the first article of the "act of acceptance of the protocol of the London conference," signed at the Hague on the 21st July, 1814, reproduced this sentence, adding, "so that the two countries should only form one and the same State, to be governed by the constitution already established in Holland, to be modified by common accord." Had this "*complete and intimate fusion*" been possible, then the projectors would have accomplished an admirable work, offering the surest guarantees for the maintenance of European peace, and the durability of their own fabric. But, unfortunately, the conception was utopian, or at all events, attended by obstacles almost insuperable.

Independent of the allies disdaining to consult the feelings of the Belgic people, they appeared to have lost sight of the moral history of the Netherlands, and to have forgotten those deep-rooted hatreds, jealousies, and dissensions, both religious and political, that had divided the two people, since the time of Philip II. In their

* The equivocal conduct of the Prince Royal of Sweden (from the battle of Leipsig down to the moment of the entrance of the allies into Paris, in 1814, when he hoped to be called to the throne of France) is well known to all public men.

eagerness to consummate their work, they overlooked all the discordant elements and jarring interests of which it was framed, and proclaimed "fusion,"—as if national fusions were to be obtained by the mere diplomatic transfer of one people to the dominion of another.

"It is well," says a Dutch author, "for the Almighty to say 'let there be light;' but when men attempt to ape the language of the divinity, they expose themselves to produce the blackest darkness where they hoped to shed floods of light."

Only one of two things could have produced this desirable fusion; that is, that either one or other of the two nations should have renounced its principles and prejudices to embrace those of the other; or, that both, forgetting those commercial rivalries, differences of religion, habits, interests, traditions, and language, which render them absolute antipodes, should have met half way, and endeavoured to bury all individuality in their mutual exertions for the general good.

But this concession could not be expected from Holland; for, independent of the tenacity of her national character, the treaty of Paris literally asserted that Belgium was given to her as "an extension of territory." This phrase was apparently acted upon in many instances by the government, as if the many had been made over in fee to the few, and as if Belgium was intended to serve as a mere corollary to Holland. On the other hand, who is there, who had studied the Belgian characteristics, and considered the preponderating influence of the clergy, the bigotry of the people, the jealous pride of the aristocracy, or the numerical superiority of the population, that could await concession from them without sufficient guarantees being given in return? And, without concessions on one side or the other, all prospect of fusion, or even co-existence was utterly hopeless. In this mat-

ter, the numerical disproportion was an invincible obstacle; for history may offer various instances of the gradual amalgamation of inferior with superior bodies, but it is against all reason and precedent to anticipate success when the proportions are reversed. This disproportion produced another evil that will be shown presently.

It is not, therefore, too much to affirm that the allies founded their conclusions on false premises—that being impelled by an over-eagerness to re-establish the equilibrium of Europe, and to erect a barrier, they placed too great confidence in the wisdom and influence of the king of the Netherlands; in the security of the restored dynasty in France; in the reciprocal pliancy of the people whom they were resolved to unite; and in the philanthropic but deceptive hope that time, mutual conciliation, and prudent government would soften the long-existing differences that separated the two nations, and so temper down their animosities as to guarantee the security of an edifice, which the framers looked upon as a model of diplomatic skill.

But the germs of national and individual separation were implanted in the structure from the first outset. The union could only exist by a complete similarity of interests, rights, and privileges; by the strictest impartiality in the distribution of employments, and an equality of representation. But the first and last of these essentials were impracticable. The fundamental law, the passing of which is not altogether without taint, went far to secure to both countries most of these vital requisites. At the same time it was distinguished by one or two vices of a striking nature: the one was its not having made any provision for the ministerial responsibility; and the other, its omitting to grant the sovereign the power of dissolving the chambers—de-

fects which, it will be seen hereafter, led to grievous consequences.*

This code, infinitely better adapted to Holland than Belgium, also established, at first starting, a system of representation fraught with disastrous results. Here, in fact, was the rock on which the vessel split on being first launched. It was an easy matter, indeed a matter of sound policy, to proportion all civil and military employments to the numerical strength of the respective populations and contingents; but to have given equal representation—that is, a representation proportioned to the relative amount of population—would at once have thrown a large majority into the hands of the Belgians, and thus placed Dutch interests utterly at the mercy of the former. For, taking the then population of Belgium at 3,337,000 and that of Holland at 2,046,000, the just proportion of deputies would have been 68 for the former, and 42 for the latter. Here was a difficulty for which the skill of the profoundest legislators failed to discover an effective remedy. All that remained, therefore, was to divide the number of representatives in exact proportions. Consequently, Holland, whose population

* The fundamental law, entitled "*Grondwet voor het Koningrijck der Nederlanden*," was drawn up by a commission of twenty-four members, half Dutch and half Belgians, and was, in fact, a mere modification of the fundamental law of the United Provinces. It was presented for the king's sanction on the 13th of July, 1815, and was promulgated by royal proclamation on the 24th of August following. The notables of Holland, who had been assembled to discuss the original project, voted for it unanimously: but in Belgium, out of 1323 voters, there were 796 noes, and 527 ayes. But as 126 of the former declared that their negative votes related only to such articles as regarded religious matters, these votes were held to be affirmative as concerned the other points; and as about one-sixth of the Belgic notables had not voted, their absence was also looked on as affirmative; and the whole passed into law, but not without creating general clamour.

was upwards of one-third less than Belgium, obtained an equal number of legislative guardians; and thus, at one blow, the basis of national representation was vitiated, and a lasting grievance established. The following are the motives for this disposition, as they were laid down in the report prefixed to the fundamental law:—

"The number of deputies which each province returns to the States-General could not be unanimously regulated.

"Several members opined that the basis at once the most just, the most simple, and the most certain, was the respective population of each: plausible reasons and numerous examples were not wanting to support this opinion. These arguments were, however, combatted, and the justice of the application of these examples to the union of our provinces was contested. It was stated that the colonies that recognized the northern provinces as their mother country, the importance of their commerce, and several millions of inhabitants who acknowledge its bye-laws, would not permit the adoption of this basis; that the only means of establishing perfectly, and for ever, a sincere and intimate union between the two countries, was to give both to one and the other an equal representation. The majority adopted this opinion."

It is imperative, however, to observe that the defect of this distribution was utterly independent of the will of the king or his counsellors. It must be attributed to statistical causes that defied all other mode of arrangement. Its evils were aggravated, however, by the selfish egotism of many Dutch deputies, as well as the inexorable diversity of interests, and religious tenets, existing in the chambers. The mere fact of half the States-General being Protestant and the other half Catholic, and of a moiety employing a language that was

scarcely understood by the other, was in itself sufficient to produce an invincible schism.*

The bad fruits of this system soon betrayed themselves. On referring to the official debates and votes of the second chamber of the States-General, it results that almost every legislative or financial project injurious to Belgian interests, that passed the house, was carried by majorities almost exclusively Dutch, whilst all those of a similar nature that were thrown out were supported by Dutch minorities. Again, all propositions tending to benefit Belgium, fell through the influence of Dutch majorities, or, in passing, were strenuously opposed by minorities of the same nation. On the other hand, in every project immediately benefitting Holland at the expense of Belgium, the whole of the Dutch clung together, and, allowing for the influence of the court and government over some few Belgian functionaries, majorities were thus generally secured both to the Dutch and ministry. Thus some of the most oppressive and obnoxious taxes and projects passed into law, and thus were engendered many of those grievances, the first effect of which was universal and immediate discontent.†

* The second chamber of States-General was composed of 110 deputies; 55 for Holland, and the same number for Belgium. The respective proportions for each country was one for 37,000 souls in the former, and one for 61,000 in the latter. The mean average was one for 50,000—the maximum being one for 34,000 in Groningen, and the minimum one for 82,000 in Namur.

† The following extracts from some tables published by Dr. Friedlander, will shew more distinctly the nature of these votes:—

"Sitting 30th June, 1831.—Discussion on the *mouture* and *abbatage* tax: for—Dutch 53, Belgian 2.

"Sitting 20th Dec. 1822.—Sinking-fund syndicate: for—Dutch 46, Belgian 20.

"Sitting 28th April, 1827.—Annual budget: for—Dutch 49, Belgian 4.

Independent of this defect in the mode of representation, the fundamental code consecrated a financial abuse utterly at variance with the usages and privileges of all constitutional institutions; this was the mode of voting the ordinary estimates for ten years, by which the deputies were deprived of all possibility of scrutinizing the expenditure, or of demanding the slightest amendments or economies during a lapse of time, which naturally must have produced a necessity for revision, or at least examination. It is true, the budget was divided into two sections, the one decennial or ordinary, the other annual or extraordinary. But the most important items, those, in short, that require the most jealous attention, and are the subject of the liveliest annual discussions, in every other legislative body—such, for instance, as the civil list, war, navy, colonial, foreign, home, and finance department estimates—were included in the first; so that, this budget having once passed the house, it was screened from all further scrutiny for *ten years*. The second section, forming about a fourth of the whole, comprised such extraordinaries as may be said to arise from casual circumstances, including, however, nearly the whole expenditure of the department of justice.*

" Sitting 18th Dec. 1829.—Second decennial budget: for—Dutch 48, Belgian 13," &c. &c.—*Abfall der Niederländen. Hambourg*, 1833.

The decennial budget, voted on the 27th of April, 1820, amounted to	59,675,054 f.
The ways and means	47,979,113
Deficit	11,895,939
The annual budget for 1820 was	22,314,481 f.
The ways and means	17,754,390
Deficit	4,560,091
Total of both budgets	82,189,535 f.
Total deficit	16,456,030

The vices of this decennial arrangement were so flagrant, that it is a matter of surprise that twenty-four men could have been found in Holland and Belgium to propose it as a part of the fundamental law, or that the States-General should not unanimously have availed themselves of the 229th article of that code, in order to modify a system so pregnant with abuses; abuses, which were they attempted to be introduced or defended in the English Commons, would be sufficient to produce a general conflagration throughout Great Britain. Another striking fault in the mode of voting the budgets was consecrated by the standing orders of the chambers, which forbad all amendments. Thus the budget was to be carried or rejected *in toto!*

Having pointed out some of the inherent defects of the union and fundamental law, and the utter hopelessness of all fusion, the next step is to detail some of those grievances that were gradually undermining the throne and government, and which produced results, that appeared to be anticipated by all but the public authorities. "When a mine is charged," says Count Charles Van Hoggendorp, in one of his able publications, "a spark suffices to cause its explosion. Such was the situation of affairs in Belgium, where this explosion was looked for during many years, and an approaching revolution publicly talked of in the streets of Brussels." Whence, then, arose the blindness of the cabinet, the supineness of the authorities, and the indifference of those who ought to have been aware that the volcano was raging beneath their feet? A blindness still more inexcusable, since the July revolution had broken forth, and warned them of their danger.

It has often been observed, and not without justice, that, if the government were imprudently opposed to all concession, why were the ambassadors of foreign powers

so utterly indifferent to the signs of the times? It is affirmed that some of them were cautioned and implored to obtain the mediation of their courts, in order to induce the Netherlands government to adopt such measures as were calculated to avert the storm. It is evident, by the result, that they either neglected this advice, and thereby committed a most reprehensible error, or, if they did act upon it, it is a further proof of the fatal tenacity and want of foresight of those at the helm of the state. For it is indisputable that, almost every one of the grievances complained of might have been modified and removed; and, although their removal never could have produced "intimate fusion," still it might have destroyed all just pretext for disunion, and stamped any attempt at revolution as an act of wanton and unjustifiable rebellion. Without absolutely applying to the Netherlands government the trite aphorism of "*quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat*," it is certain that a film overspread their eyes, and that they abandoned themselves to a degree of false security that was the very reverse of what was expected from the politic character of the monarch.

CHAPTER III.

ABOLITION OF TRIAL BY JURY—ENUMERATION OF GRIEVANCES—SINKING FUND SYNDICATE—MILLION OF INDUSTRY—'MOUTURE' AND 'ABBATAGE' TAXES—COMPLAINTS OF THE CATHOLICS—ATTEMPT TO PROTESTANTIZE THE COUNTRY—THE BELGIAN YOUTH NOT PERMITTED TO BE EDUCATED OUT OF THE KINGDOM.

WITHOUT enumerating a multitude of minor vexations, for the most part extremely frivolous, and amply compensated for by other advantages, it will be sufficient to point out those of a graver character, which are signalized as the causes that gradually led to the explosion. "The difference of national character," says the writer previously cited, "had engendered grievances, and these grievances had excited universal discontent and national animosity. The division between the two countries existed *de facto*. In lieu of a fusion, all the means employed to amalgamate the two people had only served to disunite them still further. This discontent was not the birth of a day; it dates from the first union of the two states."*

This admission is highly important, not only from its source, but because it is a striking refutation of that doctrine which would go to prove that the Belgians had no grievances, and that their revolution was a sud-

* "*Separation de la Hollande et de la Belgique*, Oct. 1830. Amsterdam. By Count Charles von Hoggendorp." This enlightened politician and publicist, one of the most honourable and disinterested members of the Dutch Chambers, died lately in the prime of life.

den and wanton act, the mere extemporary result of the events of July. Had these events not occurred, had the fatal ordonnances of Prince Polignac never been issued, it is probable the Belgian revolution would not have exploded in 1830.—But it is against the universal opinion of all impartial persons to affirm that the two countries could have long hung together without the most thorough reforms and changes in the mode of government, and the abolition of some of the most obnoxious grievances. "Some persons have pretended," adds Count Hoggendorp, "that the example of the French revolution, and the sanguinary struggle within the heart of Paris, inflamed the public mind in Belgium, as well as throughout all Europe. But this event did not *produce* the inflammable matter. Without the *pre-existence* of discontent arising from grievances, not even the French revolution would have overturned Belgium. Thus it is, that superficial persons who have not allowed themselves time to investigate the subject, have mistaken the *accessary* for the *principal;* the efforts of a few influential men, only served to set fire to the mine. Without previous discontent, a whole furnace would not have caused an explosion."

Before entering upon these grievances, it is necessary to observe that, previous to the accession of the Prince-Sovereign, sundry modifications were made by him, in the administration of justice that it would have been more prudent either to have deferred or avoided altogether. The king of Prussia, in order to avoid the effects of any sudden transition in his newly-acquired Rhenan Provinces, had maintained the trial by jury and publicity of examination established by the French. Less prudent than this enlightened monarch, the Prince-Sovereign directed the abolition of these institutions, not by the vote of the chambers, but by a simple edict

issued on the 6th Nov. 1814; thus, at the very outset, awakening the fears and jealousies of the legal profession, and indeed of the whole nation, which, though perhaps unable fully to appreciate all the virtues of that inestimable institution, looked on its abrogation as a restriction of their liberties, and perhaps, for the first time, felt all the value of the blessing they had lost. This was followed by other changes in the judicial system, intended to place it nearly on the footing of that of Holland—a measure, which, however well adapted to the habits and traditions of the latter, was totally dissonant with the ancient customs or modern usages of the Belgians, especially since their submission to France.

In addition to the defects in the representative system, the mode of voting the ways and means, and the abolition of the trial by jury, the Belgians complained of the following grievances:

1st. The imposition of the Dutch language upon all functionaries, whether civil or military.

2d. The extreme partiality shown in the distribution of all places and employments.

3d. A financial system that pressed heavily and unjustly on Belgium, which was made to contribute to the payment of debts incurred by Holland long prior to the union, and the imposition of sundry oppressive taxes repugnant to the habits and usages of the people.

4th. The establishment of the supreme court of justice (*haute cour*) and all other great public institutions in the north.

5th. The indisposition of the government towards the Catholics, and a real or supposed desire to "Protestantize" the people; the establishment of a philosophic college at Louvain, the monopoly of education, and the suppression of the episcopal and other national colleges and free schools.

The first of these measures was ordained by an edict, dated 15th September, 1819. Of the utility of a unity of idiom in all transactions connected with the internal economy of a state, there can be no question; but nothing could be more impolitic, or pregnant with dangerous consequences, than its arbitrary enforcement, especially as it operated on a majority who already entertained sentiments of hostility towards the minority. Its evil effects were immediate. It diffused discontent amongst the numerous and influential classes, who aspired to the various branches of the legal profession, or indeed to employments of any kind, and was in fact one of the great predisposing causes that led to the revolution.

The affinity between the Dutch and Flemish idioms, which spring from a common root, might have palliated the experiment, as *a mere experiment*, in the Flanders and vicinity of Antwerp; but to inflict, as a *sine quâ non*, upon the Wallons, South Brabanters and inhabitants of Hainault, a language so diametrically opposed to that universally employed by the middling and upper classes, was an exclusive and vexatory measure, that was sorely felt by every father of a family throughout the country.

Upon the rising generation, the hardships may have been less severe; for, by force of study from early youth, a certain degree of proficiency might be acquired in the Dutch idiom. But every philologist is aware of the difficulty, indeed impracticability, of ever obtaining that absolute and intimate knowledge of a foreign language that can enable a man to cope successfully in abstruse argument with a native professor of another country. Still more so, when he is required to elucidate the subtleties and chicaneries of the law, or to combat fine-drawn definitions and technicalities, the success of which so often depends on the just application or

force of a word, and, above all, on the avoidance of any expression that may tend to throw ridicule on the speaker.

Take, for example, a Russian barrister; let him enter a French court, and there argue against M. Dupin, or any of the great French lawyers; what chance of success would he have, however great his talent, or his knowledge of French jurisprudence? and yet the Russians are supposed to be as conversant with French as with their own idiom. Again, let a German *not* educated all his life in England, where he may have adopted the vernacular as a second nature, but brought up—mark the difference—in the bosom of his own family, or at an university where German was the language of common intercourse, and English that of mere scholastic labour. Let this German propose to plead in Westminster Hall; who would give him a brief?

If, therefore, the measure fell heavily on the youth of the country, what must have been its effects on men of riper years, who, having devoted their whole existence to cultivate the language of their country, were thus suddenly required either to adopt the Dutch idiom, or to renounce for ever the fruits of twenty or thirty years' labour? Many examples could be cited of distinguished practitioners, who were thus either entirely lost to their profession, or who sunk from pre-eminence into comparative obscurity. Thus, their ambition and fortunes being marred, their prospects blighted, and their hearts filled with bitterness, they turned their pens and their talent against the government, and devoted themselves to the subversion of institutions that they looked on as destructive to their interests and liberties. This hostility was of no trifling import, for it may safely be affirmed that the explosion was almost entirely the work of this class of citizens.

It has been attempted to defend this measure, not

only on the ground of the importance of establishing a unity of idiom in the courts and public offices, but on that of precedent. No one can deny, that the introduction of a general idiom tended to facilitate the despatch of business, and was even advantageous to the ends of justice. But, admitting the utility, let it be asked, why were the majority selected as the victims? Why were nearly *four* millions of Belgians to adopt the dialect of *two* millions of Dutch? Especially, as it is a notorious fact that the cases brought into court were as six to one in favour of Belgium, and consequently the whole of the evidence and necessary documents were first drawn up in French or Flemish. If the Dutch, from their habits and antipathies, could never have been induced to submit to the compulsory introduction of a foreign language, was it just or politic to expect greater pliancy on the part of their more numerous fellow-subjects?

As to precedent, it is true the Romans made a similar attempt, and enforced it under the penalty of death. But the imposition of their classic language, however arbitary, had its benefits. It was the means of propogating civilization, learning, and Christianity. Besides, Rome was the universal conqueror and dictator—the fountain of science and the arts; whilst other European nations were comparative barbarians, and their idioms mere local jargons. But for a small nation like the Dutch to attempt to banish from a country a polished universal language, the vehicle of common parlance, correspondence, commerce, diplomacy, and the theatres, and to replace it by one that was unknown beyond their own frontier—unknown both in literature, jurisprudence, legislation or diplomacy—was a measure of unrivalled boldness. Even Prussia, who, with regard to the population of the Duchy of Posen, had an immense majority, never evinced such a pretension. On the contrary, the

Polish language was mantained in the courts of law, and all acts of government published in the two languages.

The fundamental code never contemplated such a proceeding; and had the allies been consulted, they would either have been ignorant of the commonest workings of human nature, or they would have desecrated the attempt, not only as dangerous and impolitic, but in opposition to the treaties of the union, which declared "*that no obstacle or restriction should be imposed on one province to the benefit of another.*"

The second grievance—one that was most severely felt by every individual in Belgium, no matter what his rank or station in life—was the marked preference evinced by the government in the distribution of all civil and military employments; a partiality not resting on vague report, but borne out by indisputable proofs.

It has been often argued in defence of this proceeding, that the government was justified from the want of talent in the people of the southern provinces, who had neither the sound education, application, knowledge or experience that characterize the Dutch. It is certainly no easy matter to establish a comparative scale between the merits of the two people in regard to the two first qualifications, but it is fair to demand how were they to obtain knowledge or experience without practice; and how could they acquire practice, if they were excluded from employment? It has been farther attempted to substantiate this accusation of inaptitude by the results of the revolution, which, it is affirmed, has not produced a single man of pre-eminent talent, either as a statesman or legislator, and that so great has been the dearth of military capacity, that the nation has been obliged to have recourse to the officers of a neighbouring state, in order to place her army on an efficient footing.

That the revolution has not produced any of those

superior minds which, in times of popular commotion, often flash like fiery meteors across the political horizon, is true; and most fortunately so for the repose of Europe. For, had such a spirit sprung up; had such a commanding genius risen from the boiling cauldron, it would have been no difficult matter for him to have attained supreme power; and at a moment when revolution and democracy were rife throughout Europe, who can calculate the miseries and convulsions that might have ensued ere a check had been placed on his ambition? Fortunately, however, these evils have been averted by the discretion and moderation of more prudent and less ambitious men, who, if they did not display transcendent capacity, possessed the greatest of all desideratums—sound sterling sense, and a perfect knowledge of what best suited their country and the general repose of Europe.

But, although Belgium has not produced its Cromwell or Napoleon, and although no extraordinary talent has shown itself, is this any excuse for the impolicy of Dutch partiality? Was this partiality calculated to promote "fusion" or attachment to the government? Could the monarch, with whom rested the revision of all nominations, expect to reign in the hearts of a people, whose fathers, brothers, and husbands were mere stepping-stones for their Dutch brethren? Could the dynasty expect assistance in the hour of need from the middling classes, or common fidelity from the Belgian troops, who being in the proportion of three to one more numerous than the Dutch, saw themselves almost exclusively commanded by officers of that nation? Could the soldiers or non-commissioned officers have any attachment to a banner which was to them the symbol of injustice; or could they evince any devotion to foreign officers who, on almost every occasion, exercised the most marked

preference in promoting their own countrymen? Was this fulfilling the noble mandate with which the king of the Netherlands had been entrusted by the allies; or securing that moral barrier against France, the grand object of the union—an object ten thousand times more important than the costly fortresses or the bayonets of the Netherlands army?

In extenuation, the position of the government is declared to have been extremely embarrassing. On account of the asserted dearth of talent, it was placed between the necessity of employing inferior capacities, or of committing acts of apparent partiality by preferring Dutch. But even admitting this, by way of hypothesis, what was the result? Not only were the great majority deprived of employment and advancement, and thus materially and physically injured, but the motive of rejection was a proof of contempt; a moral insult most galling to a people, who are certainly not without their full share of self-love, pride, and jealousy.

In a proceeding of this nature, the cause matters little; one must look to effects, and these were most pernicious. Discontent and disgust not only found its way into the palaces of the nobility and the abodes of the middling classes, but was carried by the young militiamen into the cottages of their parents. This may be looked on as one of the principal causes, why, at the breaking out of the revolution, the soldiers deserted their colours by whole battalions, and having trampled under foot the Orange cockade, gladly hastened to enrol themselves under their national standard. It is not meant to say that seduction was not employed to induce the men to abandon their ranks; but this seduction was more easily effected from the pre-existence of discontent.

Exact data are wanting to show the relative number

of civilians of each nation, who were employed; it will suffice to observe, that of the seven cabinet ministers, there were only two Belgians; of the forty-five privy councillors, twenty-seven were Dutch, eighteen Belgian; of thirty-nine diplomatists, nine only were Belgian; of the referendaries first class, eight Dutch, five Belgian; of fourteen directors-general, only one Belgian; of the nine directors of the great military establishments, not one Belgian; of the 117 persons employed in the home department, eleven Belgian; of fifty-nine in that of finance, five Belgian; and of 102 in that of war, ninety-nine Dutch, and only three Belgian.

But the most striking example of all is to be found in the Netherlands official army-list for 1830, where the immense preponderance of Dutch over Belgian officers is scarcely credible, being in the proportion of twelve and ten to one in some branches, and about six to one upon the whole.* It is not, therefore, to be mar-

	Dutch.	Belgians.
Generals	5	0
Lieutenant-generals	21	2
Major-generals	50	5
Staff	43	8
Colonels (infantry)	25	3
Lieutenant-colonels	19	5
Majors	78	10
Captains	400	122
Lieutenants	538	70
Second-lieutenants	394	49
	1,454	254
Colonels of cavalry	7	3
Lieutenant-colonels	12	3
Majors	17	8
Captains	81	24
Lieutenants	199	46
	316	84

velled at, that there was a deficit of superior officers, especially in the staff, artillery, and engineers, where fair promotion was denied to them; for of forty-three staff-officers, only eight were Belgian; of forty-three field-officers of artillery, only one Belgian, and of twenty-three field-officers of engineers, not one Belgian; and yet many of the captains had served with honour and distinction under Napoleon;* nor can it be a matter of surprise, that there was an utter want of cordiality between the soldiers of the two nations, and a general disgust for the Dutch service, in no way recompensed by the elevated rate of pay. It is said that it was not the fault of the government, if there were not more Belgians in the two scientific departments of the army; as the rule of the service required that they should be recruited from the military school, and the Belgian parents declined sending their children to this school. True, they were so disinclined, but it must be

	Dutch.	Belgians.
Colonels of artillery	6	0
Lieutenants-colonels	13	0
Majors	24	1
Captains	79	8
Lieutenants	238	24
	360	33
Colonels of engineers	5	0
Lieutenant-colonels	8	0
Majors	10	0
Captains	42	5
Lieutenants	63	4
	128	9

—*Jaarboekje voor het Koninklijke Leger der Nederlanden*, 1830.

* Captain (now General) Goblet, for instance, who signalized himself in the defence of St. Sebastian, where, after all his superiors were put *hors de combat*, he was intrusted with the command.

observed in reply, that the governor, officers, and professors, as well as the mode of instruction, were Dutch, the academy was in a Dutch garrison, and the chief tendency of the establishment anti-Catholic; and moreover, that upon every examination or passing of students, the Dutch cadets were promoted over the heads of the Belgians.

The next point is that of finance. It is not intended to discuss the general merits of the system, but merely such portions as are directly connected with the question of grievances. It results from official statements, that, notwithstanding upwards of fifteen years' uninterrupted repose and boasted commercial prosperity, no diminution was effected in the taxes, no decrease in the public burthens. On the contrary, the united budgets augmented from 54,000,000 of florins in 1814, to 73,200,000 fl. in 1819, and 85,076,000 fl. in 1829, had not been reduced below 80,000,000 fl. in 1830. This was accompanied by constant deficits requiring a succession of heavy loans; for, although the average wants of the state amounted to about 82,000,000 fl., the revenue, in the most favourable years, never exceeded 75,000,000 fl., thus presenting an average annual excess of expenditure, over receipts of about 7,000,000 fl.*

It is true, that the Netherlands government commenced its career under very great financial disadvantages. For, on one hand, no country in Europe had suffered more severely than Holland from forced loans, contributions, and the pressure of ancient debts; while, on the other, the French authorities in Belgium had carried off all the public treasure, and left the finances in a state of such utter exhaustion and confusion, that

* "Exposé Historique des Finances du Royaume des Pays Bas." Bruxelles, 1829.

the new government found little more than £12,000 in its coffers; and as the budget of 1814 amounted to 54,000,000 fl., and the receipts could only be calculated at 38,000,000 fl., the new financial existence commenced with a deficit of nearly 16,000,000 fl. Scarcely had the young kingdom time to breathe, ere the return of Napoleon from Elba demanded new sacrifices; so that, in 1815, there was an excess of expense over receipts of upwards of 40,000,000 fl., causing an unavoidable deficit in the two first years of more than four millions and a half sterling. The treaty of London of 13th of August 1814, having imposed on the king the necessity of contributing to the construction of the fortresses, 45,000,000 fl. were required for this service, so that the very infancy of the state was oppressed by a necessity of raising loans to the amount of 101,000,000 florins.

The earliest financial grievance complained of by the Belgians, was the saddling them with the quote part payment of the interests of the resuscitated debt of Holland, called "*dette différée*," the capital of which amounted to 1,200,000,000 of florins, which, together with 800,000,000 fl. of active debt, gave a total capital of 2,000,000,000 florins *exclusively Dutch*. It has been argued by many able writers, that the resuscitation of the first of these debts, two-thirds of which had been annulled by the French, was not called for by circumstances; that the evil was past and forgotten, that the kingdom was not in a situation to admit of increased burthens, and that, as the interest in this stock had past from the hands of its original purchasers into those of mere stock-jobbers, who had bought it at a low price, the latter would reap all the advantages of its revival, whilst the original proprietors and their heirs would derive no benefit. But surely such an argument cannot hold good for a moment; for admitting the

feeble condition of the exchequer, it never can be too late to perform an act of justice, or too soon to redress an act of spoliation; and although the original holders had disposed of their stock, those who purchased it tendered them an equivalent, incurred all risks, and became *bonâ fide* proprietors, justly entitled to any turn of good fortune that might ensue. It might as well be argued that, in the event of national bankruptcy, the purchaser should have a claim on the original holder for reimbursement of his losses.

Besides, the revival of that debt was not only eminently politic, as regarded the credit of the new government, which thus gave a striking proof to Europe of the sentiments of good faith and integrity with which it was animated, but it was highly favourable to the new dynasty by inspiring confidence in the equity of the monarch.

Were the arguments employed against the revival of this debt applied to other transactions of similar nature, it might lead to the most fatal consequences, and the foulest acts of dishonesty and breaches of faith on the part of governments resolved to defraud the public creditor; for there is no very wide distinction between refusing to pay a just debt, and declining to revive one that has been cancelled, not by national will, but by foreign conquest. Therefore, if the Dutch government had not acted as they did, they would have sanctioned or confirmed an act of spoliation, that must be reprobated by every honest man as the last act of tyranny, or the direst misfortune that can overwhelm a nation.*

Admitting the policy and equity of the revival of the

* These observations, applicable to the Spanish finance system of 1834, were written many months before that act of spoliation was thought of.—Ed.

"*deferred debt*," it is not possible to deny the hardship of imposing on the Belgian people a tax in which they had not the slightest interest, either past or present; not even that of national honour. For thus from a trifling burthen, known as the Austro-Belgian debt, not exceeding 32,000,000 florins capital, they were suddenly called upon to contribute their share in the discharge of the enormous dead weight which had been contracted by the people with whom they were forcibly united. Thus, when the peace of 1815 finally settled the destinies of the Netherlands, instead of bringing a diminution of taxation to the Belgians, the whole of their principal imposts were doubled, and this without the slightest prospect of ultimate decrease. If there be a single point in political economy that is comprehended by the people in general, it is taxation, or rather its effects, for this comes directly home to their pockets. It cannot be a matter of astonishment then, that universal discontent was created amongst them, on finding that the taxgatherer's demands were two-fold those of preceding years, and that their condition under the new government was more burthensome than it had been during their junction with France.

In order to meet the periodical deficits that accompanied the presentation of the annual budget, it was found necessary, not only to augment the customs and excise duties, and to act on a system utterly opposed to the acknowledged principles of political economy, but to have recourse to extraordinary modes of taxation. Thence arose the imposition of the odious taxes known as the "*mouture*" and "*abbatage*."

The first of these was a per centage exacted at the mill on ground corn, or on meal introduced into the city. The annual produce of this tax, one of the most grievous that could be inflicted on a people whose chief

sustenance was bread, amounted to about 5,500,000 florins, and was the more impolitic, since it principally affected the lower classes, by whom this augmentation in the price of the great staple commodity of existence was felt with bitter poignancy. In Holland, where the consumption of bread is infinitely less, and where potatoes and other vegetables form the principal article of subsistence, the grievance was the more endurable; but it was utterly repugnant to the habits and customs of the southern provinces, and excited popular dissatisfaction to the highest pitch.

The second of these taxes, producing about 2,500 000 florins, was a wholesale poundage levied at the slaughter-house on all carcasses, and this also after the municipal duties (*octroi*) had been paid on the live animal at the city-gates. But its pressure falling more directly on the affluent classes created less outcry, and might probably have been maintained had it not been promulgated and linked in public opinion with the odious "*mouture*." These obnoxious imposts passed the chambers on the 21st July, 1821. Some idea may be formed of their extreme unpopularity in Belgium, by referring to the division, which on that occasion stood thus; majority 55—minority 51; of the former, *two* only were Belgians, and of the latter, *not one* was Dutch. Thus out of fifty-three Belgians, two only could be found to vote against the interests of their constituents; the remaining two, who were accidentally absent, openly expressed their dissent. It would be impossible to advance a stronger proof of national feeling, or of the impolicy of the government in persisting in a measure of this kind in defiance of the opinions and votes of a whole people. But, unfortunately, the ministers were satisfied with majorities, no matter how obtained, or no matter how injurious the consequences to themselves

and the country. Fatal and blind policy! to be explained on no other grounds than that they entertained an overweening opinion of their own strength, and considered themselves better acquainted with the state of public feeling in Belgium than the representatives of the people themselves. For it would be too grave an accusation to assert that they actually disregarded public opinion, or that they were resolved to sacrifice the interests of the southern provinces to those of the north.

Notwithstanding the most urgent petitions and remonstrances, it was not until 1829 that these imposts were withdrawn; but, although this abolition caused a momentary reaction, the mischief was too deeply engrafted to be effaced by a concession that was only wrung from the government, after it had been twice obliged to withdraw its project for the decennial budget of 1830-40.

The repeal of these taxes having caused a falling-off of more than eight millions in the revenue, without there being any corresponding reduction of expenditure, it was necessary to make up the deficiency by the introduction of other imposts. The first was, therefore, replaced by a duty on horses, horned cattle and sheep; and the second by an augmentation in the excise; namely, fifty per cent. on foreign, and thirty per cent. on native wines and spirits; twenty-five per cent. on salt, beer, and vinegar, and ten florins per cwt. on sugar. Thus, although the unpopular taxes were repealed, the burthens of the country were not alleviated; so that, when the first burst of joy had passed over, public dissatisfaction returned to its former level. Besides, from shifting the onus from the consumer to the producer, a check was given to the multiplication of primary matter; and by augmenting the duties on foreign wines and spirits, consumption was diminished, smuggling pro-

moted, and the revenue deteriorated; evils generally attendant upon the prohibitive system, which formed the grand basis of the Netherlands commercial policy.

The embarrassments in which the government had already involved itself, as early as the year 1822, had obtained such a height that it became necessary to raise a further loan of fifty millions of florins. But this assistance was of little avail. Each succeeding budget was marked by a large deficit, until at length the distress of the exchequer became so imminent, that, after several schemes, a plan was suggested which produced the celebrated institution entitled the "*Amortisatie Syndikaat*," or sinking fund sindicate; which, after a protracted debate, passed into law on the 30th December, 1822.

The intricacy and obscurity of this institution were such as to baffle the penetration of all those who were not absolutely initiated into its innermost arcana. Indeed, so profound was the mystery maintained as to its operations, that, although the commission was composed of seven members, all sworn to secrecy, its private transactions were said to be concealed from all save the president and his secretary.

The bill legalizing the establishment of this institution, though carried by a large majority, few of whom comprehended the details, or could ever obtain a clear insight into its complicated machinery, was warmly combatted both in and out of doors. It was argued that its principal object was to elude the vigilance of the deputies, by removing a certain portion of the public expenditure from the control and scrutiny of the states, to the custody of a secret commission, over whom they could exercise no authority—a commission, who were irresponsible, and whose accounts, according to the 49th Art. of the Statutes, were only to be laid before the

public once in ten years, and this not until 1829; seven years after its foundation. It was also objected to, as augmenting the dead weight, without diminishing annual taxation or deficits; whilst the sale of the national domains, of which it became inspector, and by which it reaped enormous profits, was compared to the conduct of a spendthrift who lives on his capital, regardless of the corresponding diminution of his income. It was declared to be in opposition to the 101st article of the fundamental law, since it ventured to execute public works in defiance of the dissent of the chambers.*

In short, it was looked on as a mysterious *imperium in imperio*, having at its command the disposal of mines, domains, the tolls on land and water communications, and other sources of revenue, inconsistent with the attributes of a private company; and that it acted upon principles utterly opposed to that system of frank and undisguised publicity, which ought to be the guide of all constitutional governments.

Whatever may have been the merits or defects of this institution, it is certain that it constantly afforded great assistance to the government; for during the first seven years of its foundation, from 1823 to 1829 inclusive, it furnished 58,885,543 florins towards covering the annual deficits.

Another financial grievance loudly complained of was the sum of one million of florins, borne in the extraordinary budget under the head of "*unforeseen exigencies*," and commonly denominated the "*million of industry.*" This item was inscribed in the estimates as an absolute global outgoing, without any return or per contra, and was thus at variance with the primitive ob-

* Those, for instance, intended to connect the island of Marken, in the Zuyderzee, with the main land.

ject of the parliamentary vote, which intended that it should be expended in loans to distressed manufacturers, or in aiding speculators in establishing mines, factories, or other commercial undertakings.

But not only was the distribution of this sum kept a profound secret from the chambers, but, though put out at high interest and in part reimbursed, neither interest or capital was subsequently carried to the public credit. Indeed, large sums were declared to have been devoted to political uses and the payment of secret services. Amongst the latter there appeared upwards of 100,000 florins to the celebrated and obnoxious M. Libry Bagnano, editor of the *National*.

Whether or not the whole of these accusations were founded on facts, it is difficult to state; but whatever may have been the case, it is certain that the manufacturing interests derived great benefits from this assistance; it was the means of promoting speculations which gradually rose from insignificance to comparative affluence. It gave an impulse to the employment of small capital in useful undertakings. It enabled young manufacturers to make head against the difficulties attending a first establishment, and aided old houses to resist the sudden pressure of misfortune. In fact, it laid the foundation of that commercial prosperity which apparently existed in Belgium at the moment of the revolution.

It is considered a false principle in political economy for governments to lend direct assistance to the manufacturing interests, which, even in periods of most pressing distress, ought to be left to the development of their own resources, and solely guided in their enterprises by the demands of the market. This may be extremely politic in old countries like England, where there is an immense floating capital, and where the

bankruptcy of one individual serves but to stimulate another to greater exertions. But in a youthful state like the Netherlands, where capital was limited, where the spirit of speculation was confined, and where a long exclusion from the benefits of general commerce had rendered the people apathetic and timid, the encouragement afforded by the government was highly advantageous. Had it not been for this assistance, and the marked protection of the crown, it is probable that the splendid establishment of Mr. Cockerell, at Seraing, near Liege, and many others of lesser note at Ghent, Tournay, Mons, and Brussels, would never have arrived at that surprising degree of perfection, which rendered the former an object of admiration even to Englishmen.*

Great as the financial grievances complained of by the Belgians may have been, the main error of the Netherlands government was not so much the impolitic imposition of the *mouture and abbatage*, the diverting from its proper channel the "million of industry," the institution of the *syndicate*, or the refusal to put high duties on coffee, tea, and tobacco, lest they should interfere with Dutch commerce, whilst they taxed the distilleries and other branches of industry that were injurious to Belgium, as the pertinacity with which they maintained their expenditure year after year, at a height far beyond their ways and means; thus utterly forgetting that, "when the resources of a state cannot be raised to a level with its expenditure, it is essential to reduce the expenditure to a level with the receipts." By neglecting this simple precept, deficit after deficit

* In virtue of a contract with the Belgic government, Mr. Cockerell has become sole proprietor of this establishment, the half of which previously belonged to the ex-government.

ensued, and in despite of the occult assistance of the syndicate, the public debt was augmented by upwards of 272 millions of florins, and with it the necessity for a corresponding increase of taxation; a fact the more remarkable, since the nation had enjoyed profound peace during sixteen years, and her commerce, industry, and agriculture were declared by government to be in a condition not of apparent, but absolute prosperity.

We now come to the fourth grievance, and perhaps no event ever created more intense dissatisfaction than that of the establishment of the supreme court of justice (haute cour) at the Hague. The adoption of this obnoxious measure, promulgated by a cabinet order of the 21st of June, 1830, called forth universal clamour; for whilst it threatened ruin to the Brussels and Liege bar, it was looked on as more pernicious in its general effects, than any previous measure imposed on Belgium by former conquerors. It entailed immense additional expense on litigants, and thence affected the whole body of citizens, by compelling them to quit their homes and carry their trials of appeal to a distant country, where the inhabitants spoke a different idiom, and where the necessaries of life were infinitely dearer. It compelled the Belgian advocates to remove their domiciles into Holland, or to abandon the greater part of their practice, and as the vast majority were naturally repugnant to such removal, it threw the monopoly into the hands of the Dutch lawyers,

This monopoly was particularly dreaded in regard to prosecutions against the press; for, however just and honourable the Dutch lawyers, it would be difficult to prevent the influence of the court and government from acting on the minds of judges who might be dismissed at the will of the crown, and who were already imbued with a strong bias unfavourable to their

Belgian brethren. The interests of the Belgian bar and public would thus be totally unrepresented, except perhaps by a few young barristers whom necessity might drive to the Hague, a grievance rendered still more severe by the want of a jury. The hardship of the case, independent of all its moral and political influences, may be brought more directly home to the reader's understanding, by his supposing that in all motions for new trials or appeals, the whole of the Irish, Scotch, and indeed ordinary circuit cases, were removed into the court of chancery, and that barristers, solicitors, clients, and witnesses were compelled to repair to London, and there remain during the tedious process of investigation and trial. That which rendered the case still more alarming was the dependent position of the judges, for although the fundamental law established the principle of life appointment, the clause was evaded, and this vital and essential accessary to the free dispensation of justice was thus converted into an instrument of despotism.

The grievances of the Catholics remain to be spoken of. We will attempt to describe them as concisely as possible.

Ever since the revolution in the sixteenth century, the legislation of Holland had been exclusively Protestant, whilst that of Belgium was no less exclusively Catholic. When the congress of Vienna decreed the arbitrary union of the two countries, their religious physiognomy had been little modified; for, although the French republic and empire had exercised some slight temporary influence over the general mind, both parties continued faithful to their prejudices and traditions. Thus, when the king of the Netherlands ascended the throne, he found himself in the presence of a large Catholic majority, consisting of two-thirds of the

population; and, as neither party evinced the slightest disposition to abandon its laws and usages, they watched each other with the jealous disquietude of two hostile armies, separated by a momentary truce. At first sight the position of the government appeared fraught with embarrassments; but, as the Catholics asserted that they sought for liberty for themselves, not for dominion over others, nothing could be more easy than the remedy. All the king had to do was to restrict his administration within a civil circle, and to abandon the different creeds to their own action. The spirit of the age seemed to dictate this prudent policy; for liberty of conscience, religious tolerance, and the respect for the faith of others had become the symbol of European civilization, the absolute essence of social order.

The United Provinces having long allowed themselves to bend to the will of the stadtholderate, the king could safely calculate on the subserviency of his Protestant subjects; the latitude and quiescence of whose religious doctrines rendered them as it were indifferent to interference. But this was not the case in Belgium. There, in despite of successive conquests and political mutations, the Catholics had succeeded in preserving intact all their religious rights and immunities, and had renounced nothing of their doctrinal individuality. Each renewed aggression served but to render them more firm, more united, and more jealous of encroachment. By a skilful tactic the clergy had also avoided separating religious from national questions; so that in times of need, each party derived strength and assistance from the other. Of this, striking examples occurred during the short-lived revolution under Joseph. In his conduct towards the church, the

king would have done well to have imitated the example of the sovereigns of England, who, although they are the constitutional heads and defenders of the established faith, abstain from all direct interference in ecclesiastical matters, wisely abandoning them to the jurisdiction of the bishops. Without being invested with the same powers *de jure*, king William assumed them *de facto*; thereby irritating the uncompromising susceptibilities, and placing himself in direct hostility with the paramount principles of the Catholic church.

The opposition of this body, therefore, commenced with the earliest infancy of the ill-assorted union. The moment the projected constitution was submitted for acceptance to the notables, the bishops raised their voices against it; stigmatizing some clauses as dangerous, and others as being directly opposed to the Catholic faith. They declared at once, if the fundamental law should pass without modification, that it could not be sworn to by the Catholics without violating their consciences and sacrificing the interests of their religion. Notwithstanding these remonstrances, and its absolute rejection by a large majority of Belgic notables, the law was promulgated. From that hour opposition appeared a matter of duty and conscience, as sacred as that of the Irish Catholics to the disabilities from which they were relieved by the act of emancipation.

The fundamental articles especially objected to as dangerous, were those relating to the liberty of the press, the public profession of all faiths, and the restrictions placed on the exercise of the Catholic religion. The clauses designated as contrary to the Roman creed, were the submission of public and private instruction to the direct control of government, the provisional maintenance of the French republican and imperial legislation,

and the exaction of the constitutional oath.* The repugnance of the Catholics to some of these articles was doubtless justifiable, but their opposition to those which gave equal protection to all religious persuasions, betrayed a jealousy and want of tolerance, strongly contrasting with their liberal professions.† A reference to the note will shew that the articles in question were drawn up in a spirit of perfect equity and tolerance, and if strictly adhered to, were essentially calculated to satisfy all parties. They might have been deemed dangerous, and perhaps in opposition to the doctrines of a creed that admits of no competition, and which holds up the ministers of all other faiths as the mercenary organs of a damnable heresy. But the Catholics were surely not entitled to claim unrestricted liberty for themselves, and to deny the same boon to others, that is, in the hypothesis of equal protection being impartially afforded to all.

But herein lay the grievance. For the Catholics declared, that the observance would be the portion of the Protestants; the infraction, the heritage of the Catholics. In order, however, to calm the alarms of the latter, the government asserted that the dispositions complained of ought to be viewed in a civil light, and as measures only of public order: consequently, that the

* The objectionable part of this oath was—"I swear to observe and maintain the fundamental law of the kingdom, and that I will not deviate nor allow any deviation from it."

† The following are the articles of the fundamental law concerning religion:—

§ 190. "Liberty of religious opinions is guaranteed to all.

§ 191. "Equal protection is accorded to all religious communions that exist in the kingdom.

§ 192. "All the king's subjects, without distinction of religious belief, enjoy the same civil and political rights, and are eligible to all dignities, &c.

§ 193. "The public exercise of all religions is permitted, unless it shall trouble public order and tranquillity."

Roman religion could not be endangered. But this produced no effect. The Catholics asserted that they had studied the history of the Dutch government, which had at all times evinced a marked hostility to their faith, and that, as both the stadtholders and privileged families had risen to power through the medium of Protestantism, they would naturally endeavour to maintain themselves through the same ascendency. Here again we find, on the part of the Catholics, jealous suspicions resulting from past prejudices, rather than a tolerant desire to follow the path of fraternal co-operation, and to admit others upon a level with themselves. They justify this, however, by saying, that they foresaw that the supreme administration would fall a prey to Dutch monopoly; that without a jury, and with judges removeable at the will of the crown, the liberty of the press would be illusory, or that it would be converted into an instrument to serve the anti-Catholic prejudices and antipathies of the government; and finally, that all the articles of the constitution, susceptible of an arbitrary or hostile interpretation, would be turned against them, especially since the national representation was composed of half Dutch.

The apprehensions of the Catholics appear to have been too often realized; for many of the journals under the influence of government spoke of the Catholics in terms the most injurious, and treated the clergy with bitter indignity; and when the latter retorted, ministerial persecution was the general result. Thus, upon the most frivolous pretexts, several priests were brought before tribunals that offered no equitable guarantees; for not only were the judges revocable at the king's will, but their sentences were uncontrolled by the verdict of a jury; so that these tribunals were little better than prevotal courts or star-chambers. On one instance

a priest was tried and condemned to imprisonment, for an alledged libel, by a special extraordinary court;* a remnant of Napoleon's despotism, still maintained in defiance of the constitution. To these acts of severity the government added no small impolicy in the selection of the objects of their wrath; the accused being, for the most part, men of high character and great popularity. Thus, when the prince-bishop of Ghent fell beneath the lash of the tribunals, his sentence was scarcely pronounced, ere it was annulled by public opinion, amidst the universal clamours of the country. Not content with this, the government directly interfered even in the attributes of the bishops and inferior clergy. The Prince De Broglie and his vicars-general, for instance, were declared to be absolved from the spiritual jurisdiction; some curates were dismissed and others refused induction, whilst their cures were left vacant during many months.

Independent of these vexations, the government adopted other measures essentially calculated to realize the apprehensions of the Catholics. Catholic instruction was obstructed, and in some measure prohibited in the schools;† books of a philosophic, or, as it was considered, of a deistical tendency were employed as standard works, and in some instances others were introduced, containing strictures on the discipline and questioning the authority of the Romish church. For a certain time a Protestant was placed at the head of public instruction; the Catholic schools and small

* The Abbé de Foere, superintendent of the religious community of the English ladies at Bruges, now member of the representative chambers, and one of the ablest and most liberal theological and metaphysical writers in Belgium.

† Of the sixty-eight inspectors of public schools in Holland, where one-third of the population is Catholic, not one was of that religion.

seminaries were suppressed, and the Catholic clergy were as far as possible debarred access to those under the control of government. The religious festivals and processions were curtailed under pretext of preserving public order,* and the national schools were erected in the style of architecture usually employed in reformed temples.† Finally, the youth of the country were restricted by an order in council from being educated out of the Netherlands territory, under the penalty of subsequent inadmissibility to all public functions, which was tantamount to the loss of civil rights.

But that which set the seal to the general exasperation, and confirmed the clergy in the idea that it was the intention of government gradually to Protestantize the country, was the establishment of the philosophic college at Louvain; attendance at which was first declared to be compulsory, but, owing to the general clamours of the nation, was subsequently made optional or facultative. Here, as the term implies, the system of education was essentially philosophic, and under the immediate superintendence of Protestant superiors and professors; and although the course of education embraced the ecclesiastical history, which comprehends the canon law, the bishops and their vicars were excluded from all jurisdiction or power of interpretation. This was held to be a grievous hardship; for the ecclesiastical history being nothing more than that of

* The grand object of the government in suppressing some of these festivals, was not to injure the Catholic religion, but to benefit the Catholic people by curtailing the number of days that are devoted to idleness and drunkenness.

† This may appear a ridiculous cause of alarm; but so great was the jealousy and apprehension of the Catholics, that even this trifle added to their fears.

the dogma, and the canon law being merely the form or vehicle under which the dogma is publicly professed, it was argued that, if the government rendered itself master of the form, it also obtained command over the dogma. These, and other theological subtleties, were discussed with extraordinary acumen by the clergy; the whole system of the government was declared to be a perpetual encroachment on the rights of the Catholics, and a direct violation of the constitution—fully justifying all their anterior apprehensions and subsequent opposition.

CHAPTER IV.

ARRÊTÉS RELATING TO THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—EXTRAORDINARY COURTS OF JUSTICE—SUPPRESSION OF CATHOLIC SEMINARIES—THE ASSOCIATION CALLED "THE UNION"—CONDUCT OF THE CATHOLICS—PERSECUTION OF THE PRESS—BELGIAN JOURNALS—THEIR CONTRIBUTORS—PROSECUTION OF THE ABBE DE FOERE, DE POTTER, AND OTHERS—BRUSSELS THE RENDEZVOUS OF DISCONTENTED FOREIGNERS.

HAVING enumerated the most oppressive grievances—grievances for the most part opposed in spirit to the treaties of the union and fundamental law—it is necessary to point out other collateral vexations which operated most powerfully on the public mind.

It has been shown, that the ministry was enabled to obtain majorities in the States-General upon many questions, which they considered essential to the prosperity and security of the whole monarchy, but which the Belgians regarded as solely intended to favour the Dutch, and as essentially injurious to themselves. Had the cabinet persisted in this plan, no matter what the means employed to secure such majorities; no matter what the inherent vices of the representative system; still it would have acted constitutionally, and, by sheltering itself behind the votes of the house, might have thrown the onus of any given measure on the national representatives. For the chambers being supposed to consist of an agglomerated body, the ministry had plausible grounds for taking the voice of the majority, as

that of the nation in general, without regard to province or party.

But this plan was too often abandoned, and a succession of *arrêtés*, or simple cabinet orders, substituted in its place; almost all of which were stigmatized as despotic acts, tending to enchain the liberty of the subject. Amongst these were the *arrêtés* of the 6th of November, 1814, abolishing the trial by jury and circumscribing the publicity of judicial proceedings; and that of the 20th of April, 1815, restricting the liberty of the press. Some idea of the severity of the latter may be formed from its enacting that all persons declared guilty of certain offences therein detailed should be punished, according to the gravity of the case, either with "exposure in the pillory from one to six hours," "civic degradation," "branding," or "imprisonment from one to six hours, and a fine of from 100 to 10,000 francs."

The action of this rigorous edict, founded on an organic law of Napoleon, was intended to be limited to one year, and ought to have been annulled on the promulgation of the fundamental code, with which it was at direct variance. Besides, the punishments it awarded were not inflicted by a jury, but by the sentence of nine judges composing an "*extraordinary special court.*" This tribunal was subsequently abolished, but the *arrêté* was maintained and its penalties enforced by the fiat of a judge and four councillors, who were liable to be dismissed from office at the will of the minister; for, up to the latest hour, the government had postponed the fulfilment of the 186th article of the charter, which guaranteed the independence and life appointment of all judges.

But this was not all; a simple *arrêté* of the 15th of September, 1819, imposed the use of the Dutch language; another of the 25th of June, 1825, established

the *compulsory* philosophic college; and two others of the 14th of June and 14th of August of the same year, suppressed the Catholic seminaries, forbade the Netherlands youth to seek instruction out of the country, and placed other vexatious trammels on public and private instruction. To these might be added several others of minor importance; which, however innocent in their individual character, were linked in public desecration with those of a more odious nature; and thus, whilst they enfeebled the connecting link between the people and the throne, they more firmly cemented that formidable alliance between the liberals and Catholics, to which may be ascribed the success of the revolution.

A word as to the origin and composition of this association, known under the title of "*the union*," may not be uninteresting. Up to the year 1828, the opposition, both in and out of the States-General, was composed of two distinct bodies; differing, however, more in individual religious opinions than in general political principles. Both struggled to obtain the same end—that is to say, civil and religious emancipation; but both pursued a different path, so that for a length of time the heterogeneous nature of their composition rendered them nearly as hostile one to the other as they were to the government. The distinction between them was not, however, so great, as to render fusion impracticable. The first of these parties was composed of the high Catholics, secular and spiritual, whose enmity to government proceeded less from any immediate repugnance to the general system of Netherlands administration, than from their aversion to certain partial measures that tended to curtail the free exercise and study of the Roman creed; to place the ministers of that church in a state of comparative vassalage, and, as they

feared, to give an anti-Catholic bias to all the institutions of the state.

The other party was composed of liberals of all denominations, whose grand object was to secure a strict execution of the fundamental law, and an abridgment of Dutch preponderance. It is important, however, not to confound the *liberals* with the *ultra-liberals*, a mistake often fallen into by strangers—the latter having, in fact, no more affinity with the former than exists in England between radicals and moderate Whigs.

Notwithstanding the jealousy and difference of opinion existing between the liberals and Catholics, the government saw that a coalition was not impracticable; it, therefore, exerted every effort to widen the schism; knowing that so long as the parties continued at variance, there could be no danger from either. But the plan utterly failed; the leaders on both sides perceiving the danger with which they were menaced, gradually drew towards each other, and proposed to bury all individualities, and to unite for the general safety. Although the fruits of the *union* were not brought to maturity until 1828, the germs of its formation may be traced back as early as 1818, and principally ascribed to the writers of two opposition journals, the *Spectator* and *Observer:* the one edited by the Abbé de Foere, an erudite and able controversialist; and the other by Messrs. Van Maanen, D'Ellougne, and Donker, three distinguished jurisconsults. The theoretical principles of the union were advocated during several years with unremitting zeal by these writers, in despite of the attacks and sarcasms of the liberal press, and the prosecutions and menaces of the government. At length the public mind being fully impregnated with the principles of the union, and the number of the proselytes being augmented by all the influential men of both

parties, a dinner was given at the house of Baron Secus; and it was there resolved that the union should throw off all secrecy, and openly pronounce itself an operative and active body. From this moment it rapidly increased in strength and importance, and, eventually, bearing down all opposition, enlisted in its cause the whole of the liberal press, which had hitherto shown little sympathy towards it.

When De Potter first returned from Rome in 1825, whither he had accompanied the Count de Celles on his mission respecting the concordat, his sentiments were essentially anti-Catholic; sentiments encouraged by the advice and opinions of his friend, the minister Van Gobelschroy, who was eager to enlist De Potter against the union. But ere many weeks the logic of De Foere and Van Meenen succeeded in winning him over to their cause; and whatever he might have been at heart, he outwardly declared himself a staunch and zealous supporter of the coalition, and soon became one of its most influential leaders.

It is erroneous, however, to suppose that the primary object of the union was the subversion of government. Such an idea might have lurked in the minds of one or two theorists, whose political principles were essentially democratic, but such purpose was alien to the general intent. The all-engrossing object was the redress of grievances, and an extension of civil liberty and religious tolerance. It cannot be too often repeated, that if the Prince of Orange had been authorized by his father to promise his consent to the removal of these grievances, the revolution would have died a natural death. The motives for sedition having disappeared, even administrative separation would not have been demanded.

As to the fate of the union at some subsequent

period, there is much difference of opinion. That it still exists, and will perhaps continue so to do until all external questions are settled, seems to be generally admitted; but it is evident that it has already lost much of its intensity, and that the greater part of the extreme opposition, and liberal press, are totally opposed to the Catholic majority in all principles of foreign policy and internal government. Indeed, it is hardly possible to suppose that elements so divergent should long be cemented in the same bond. Having specific objects in view, both liberals and Catholics sought each other's aid. But the ultra-liberals, without whose co-operation there could have been no union, now declare themselves to have been duped, and that, come what may, all future reamalgamation is impossible. Such is the outline of an association, not less important in its workings than the famous "compromise," established at Breda by the patriots of 1565.

Whilst speaking of the Catholic party, it would be most unjust not to acknowledge the services that body has rendered to its country and Europe; at all events, since the exclusion of the Nassau family, and the impracticability of bringing back the Prince of Orange, rendered it necessary for the great powers to adopt a different line of policy in regard to Belgium.

Not only did the Catholics strenuously exert themselves to stem the tide of republicanism, that was dreaded by the sane part of the nation, but it was they who principally opposed the union of Belgium to France, and who most devotedly laboured to establish the independence and nationality of their country. Without their firm and honourable co-operation, all the later efforts made by Mr. Lebeau to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring his well-digested combination to a successful issue, must have fallen to the ground; and when

that combination reached maturity, it was the Catholics, both spiritual and secular, who were the warmest supporters of the throne and administration; an instance of tolerance more remarkable, from the fact of King Leopold being the only Protestant prince in Europe, ruling over a people *exclusively* Catholic.

It is also worthy of record that, however predominant the influence of the Catholics may have been, either with the people, government, or court, on no occasion have they exerted that influence against the rational liberties of the country. On the contrary, every measure tending to enlighten or to extend civil franchises, has been supported by them with talent and disinterestedness. The conduct of King Leopold, in leaning towards this powerful portion of his people, has been eminently politic. And, after all, in what does this preference or leaning consist? why, in non-interference, and allowing them to regulate their own affairs in whatever manner they consider best suited to the maintainance of their faith; a policy too much neglected by his predecessor; for it is incontestable, that the revolution was generated and brought to maturity by the union, and that without the cordial support of the Catholic portion of the union, no government would be possible.

But to return to the press: this puissant agent had now assumed a most hostile and menacing attitude. Many of the most able Belgic pens were energetically and fearlessly engaged in exposing the grievances, and asserting the rights of the people. The acts of government were canvassed with a degree of acuteness and boldness often bordering on temerity, and not less often tinctured with the bitterest acrimony. Indeed, its errors were frequently exaggerated, its intentions misrepresented, and it was criticised with a degree of systematic virulence, not only calculated to produce

extreme personal exasperation, but of such a nature as would have led to ex officio persecution in almost any country, and subjected the authors to severe punishments at the hands of any impartial judge. That restrictive measures were sometimes urgently called for, and that the government was fully justified in exercising such means of repression as the law placed at its disposal, does not admit of a moment's doubt.

But was the penal code insufficient? Was it absolutely necessary to recur to extra-judicial measures that are only employed by prudent governments during periods of open sedition? Was it politic to have recourse to an edict, which had been promulgated prior to the adoption of the fundamental law, and which could only have been defended, even in 1815, on the ground that the return of Napoleon from Elba menaced all Europe with convulsion, and required the utmost vigilance in a country which had so recently been dissevered from France, and which had become the rendezvous of many turbulent spirits, ardently attached to the cause of the emperor? "To give moderate liberty for griefs and discontents to evaporate (so it be without too great insolence or bravery), is a safe way; for he that turneth the humours back, and maketh the wounds bleed inwards, endangereth malign ulcers and pernicious imposthumations." Surely it would have been better had the Netherlands government acted more largely on this maxim of our great philosopher, than to have adopted a system, the impolicy of which is sufficiently denoted by its baneful results.

It will be asked, what were the results? Why, in lieu of intimidation, it produced contumacy; in lieu of submission, it created redoubled activity; instead of discouragement, it engendered perseverance; and in the place of ruin to the parties, it brought the most ample pecu-

niary assistance: so that, in defiance of edicts and prosecutions, the press augmented its temerity, and assumed a tone which tended to place the government and country in a state of implacable hostility. The principal organs of public opinion were, 1st, the *Courier des Pays Bas*, in which Messrs. Claes, Ducpetiaux, Lesbroussart, Van de Weyer, Nothomb, and other able writers, maintained a series of vigorous and most harassing assaults on the government. Indeed, this journal may be considered as the fountain that furnished the most constant nourishment to the general discontent, and from the force and pungency of its polemic, became an object of extreme disquietude to the ministry. Its influence was extreme; instead of following public opinion, or preceding it at an almost imperceptible distance, it boldly stood forward, and became the beacon which pointed out the road that the chambers and people should follow. It may, in fact, be said to have concentrated the revolution in its columns. 2d. The *Spectateur* and *Observateur*. 3d. The *Politique*, a well-conducted Liege paper, to which Messrs. Lebeau, Devaux, Rogier, and other lawyers, contributed articles of remarkable logical force; and 4th, the *Belge*, principally edited by Messrs. Levae, De Potter, and Gendebien, and written in a style peculiarly adapted for the lower classes. To these may be added the *Courier de la Meuse* and *Catholique*, the latter edited by Bartels, a republican; with one or two minor journals published in the Flemish language.

Independent of the diurnal press, numerous pamphlets and political letters made their appearance, all contributing to inflame the public mind by exposing the fallacies and unconstitutionalities of the government.

A passage from one of these (the letter of Demophile, by De Potter, to the minister of the interior, M. Van

Gobelschroy) merits attention from its prophetic character. It runs thus:—"The foundation of an era of liberty and justice in Belgium is now assured, or, to speak the language of office, is *inevitable!* don't forget this, Sir, for one moment. The opposition to the ancient march of government, no matter into what hands this opposition falls, or what are its organs, must henceforth be invincible, in despite of every obstacle you may oppose to it. Sir, this opposition will be found constantly backed up by the profound, indelible sentiment of violated national rights and general discontent. This discontent, and the salutary mistrust to which it has given rise, guarantee to us the object of our vows, the sole aim of all our sacrifices, of all our efforts—*liberty!*" Thus wrote M. de Potter on the 15th Nov. 1829; and here we have a further proof that the revolution was not the mere sudden reflection of that of July, but the result of long pre-existing discontent.

In the meanwhile the government had two modes of combatting these attacks. The one, by the counteraction of a well-organized ministerial press, and the other by prosecution. Both were put into force, but unfortunately, the method of their development augmented rather than diminished the evil it sought to abate. The first of these methods was the establishment of a ministerial journal, entitled the *National*, under the direction of M. Libry Bagnano, an Italian of undoubted capacity, but of equivocal antecedents. But the polemic carried on by this publicist was of a nature so hostile to the popular opinions, the doctrines he advocated were so contrary to the views of the church and nation, the language he employed was so cynical and personal, and the servility he showed to the minister Van Maanen, of whom he was the avowed organ, was so grovelling,

that both editor and journal, soon became objects of the utmost public execration.

Independent of the unpopular doctrines defended by the *National*, it appeared that upwards of 85,000 florins had been subtracted from the "million of industry," and paid at different epochs to the editor. Thus, in lieu of affording support to the government, both this journal, and another called the *Sentinelle*, contributed largely to its overthrow; for such was the violent prejudice against the minister Van Maanen and M. Bagnano, that the ablest articles, the most logical conclusions, and the most veracious assertions, produced no other effect than to increase the general aversion for the editor, as well as for the unconstitutional means by which he was supported.

The repressive system adopted by the government, however justifiable in the spirit, was also most unfortunate in the form. From being grounded on the obnoxious edict of 1815, and other acts of a similar character, the prosecutions themselves were not only in the highest degree anti-national, but the very principles on which they were founded were considered unconstitutional and arbitrary, and gave rise to the most violent protestations. It is true the position of the government was singularly embarrassing. It was placed between the necessity of permitting accusations, often of a most dangerous and subversive tendency, to be propagated with impunity; or to have recourse to intra-judicial measures. The alternatives were both critical; but, on the whole, it would have been more politic, if, in lieu of adopting the system of prosecution, it had opened its eyes to the abyss that was yawning before it. Instead of trusting to its own power, and the stability and co-operation of neighbouring governments, it would

have done well had it continued that system of concession which it had wisely commenced, by modifying the arrêtés touching the philosophic college, and by removing the restrictions on the use of the French language. In 1829 there was yet ample time. Indeed in August, 1830, the monarchy might still have been saved. Even at a much later period, after the attack on Brussels, it only required some portion of tact and energy on the part of the Prince of Orange to have secured to himself the diadem that had been wrested from the brow of his father.

But unfortunately that brilliant star, which had shone so resplendently upon the Orange dynasty during nearly three centuries, rendering their names the most popular and illustrious amidst those of all European princes, appeared to be obscured by some fatal cloud. Whether from the incontrovertible force of events, from the original and insuperable vices of the union, or from the errors of the king's advisers, a spell seemed to be drawing the monarch and his house to their own destruction. That the king, as well as every member of his august family, was ardently devoted to the welfare of the whole kingdom, if not from reasons of inclination and equity, at least from cogent motives of self-interest, is incontestable. But kings are not exempt from the weaknesses of human nature. However wise, prudent, and well-disposed, they are not infallible; and unfortunately in the present instance, the King of the Netherlands seems to have displayed less forethought and political sagacity, and more of obstinate tenacity and personal prejudice, than it was possible to expect in a sovereign, whose name ranked pre-eminent throughout the world for circumspection and profound knowledge of constitutional policy.

The evil being accomplished, it is almost superero-

gatory to trace the moral causes that produced them. But, whatever these may have been, it is evident that no government could have been more blinded as to results, or more apparently bent on adopting every measure the most calculated to undermine its own influence, and to alienate the confidence of the people.

Political events sometimes occur that certainly baffle all human sagacity and provision. But the dissolution of the Netherlands kingdom was not one of those sudden catastrophes, the fearful offspring of one tremendous popular convulsion. The throes of the state had been long and painful. The government had been repeatedly warned, and had more than ample time for preparation. It saw, or ought to have seen, the gathering breakers, and been prepared to avoid the dangerous shoal. But it rushed heedlessly onwards, and the goodly vessel was thus cast away in broad day-light, by the sheer obstinacy or want of skill in its pilots.

There were occasions certainly when the dignity of the crown, and even the safety of the state, imperatively demanded example. But these prosecutions, however justifiable, were productive of pernicious results. De Potter, Tielemans, Bartels, Ducpetiaux, the Abbé de Foere, and many others, fell beneath the lash of the law. But such was the fever of the public mind, that the defendants were invariably looked on as martyrs to the cause of liberty, and the prosecutors as tyrants, whose only aim was to enchain the press, and humiliate the nation. The libels or subversive doctrines that formed the groundwork of the accusation, were ably defended in court, reproduced out of doors, and spread through all parts of the country by the journals. Subscriptions were raised to cover the expenses of fine and trial, and a multitude of young and ardent minds sprung up, eager to offer their gratuitous talent to the accused, as well

as to imitate their example. So that each judicial triumph gained by the government might well have been compared to a disaster, when considered as to its consequences; for there can be little doubt that these prosecutions were amongst the immediate causes that produced the explosion.

The charges brought against De Potter, Tielemans, and others, were doubtless of such a nature as would have led to their condemnation by any impartial jury in Europe or America. Indeed the trial of M. Tielemans presented certain features that seemed to legitimize the severest reprisals on the part of the government.* But the remedy in these cases was worse than the evil; for it did but increase the sedition it sought to stifle, and disseminate more widely the doctrines it strove to curb.

The government had in some measure to thank itself for another evil that occurred. In its earnest desire to realize its assertion of the Netherlands being the "classic soil of liberty," as well as with a view of attracting foreign skill and industry, the utmost encouragement was offered to strangers of all classes to settle on its hospitable and fertile soil. Thus Brussels became the rendezvous, the representative assembly, of all the discontented spirits in Europe. Regicide conventionalists, exiled Napoleonists, proscribed constitutionalists, persecuted Carbonari, oppressed Poles, disgraced Russians, radical English, and visionary German students, indiscriminately flocked to the metropolis of Brabant. There, allying themselves with such as might be regarded as the most disaffected portion of society, they not only

* Procès contre S. Tielemans et autres, accusés d'avoir excité directement à un complot ou attentat, ayant pour but de changer ou de détruire le gouvernement du royaume des Pays Bas. Bruxelles, 1829.

gave full scope to their animadversions on their own governments, but largely contributed to inflame and excite the imagination of the natives against that of the Netherlands. Of these strangers, many were conscientious, enlightened, and honourable men, victims of the most cruel acts of despotism. But amongst the number there were not a few individuals of broken fortune and desperate character—men whose sole element was commotion and civil discord; who had nothing to lose, but every thing to gain, by convulsion, and who were utterly reckless of the miseries that such convulsions entail on the majority. More dangerous guests could not be harboured in the bosom of any country.

This was a canker for which there was no remedy, except by adopting arbitrary measures of police, or by obtaining the sanction of the chambers to an alien law, that might give more extensive power to the government.* Besides, whatever may have been the proceedings of the latter in regard to three or four strangers, it may be safely affirmed, that it was utterly repugnant to the king's feelings to persecute men, who had no other spot on the continent where they might lay down their exiled heads in safety, or where they could enjoy more uninterrupted freedom, so long as they abstained from any overt act against the state. But, if the exiles had strong claims on the humanity and protection of the government, had the government no claims on the exiles? Were the latter not bound to respect the laws that afforded them

* The Republican law of Vendémiaire, anno IV., had not been abrogated, and had been acted upon in the cases of Messrs. Fontaine, Bellet, and Jador, who were expelled the country. But their expulsion created great dissatisfaction, and was held to be an infraction of the fourth section of the fundamental law, which guaranteed equal security both to foreigners and natives. The law of Vendémiaire was put in force, however, by the Belgic Government after the April riots in 1834,

protection, no matter how despotic? Was it not their duty to remain passive spectators of all civil discussions, and to abstain from interfering with the legislative proceedings of a country where they had voluntarily sought shelter, and from whence they were at liberty to remove whenever they thought proper? Was nothing due from them to the rights of hospitality and the calls of gratitude? Their residence was not compulsory, but their inaction was obligatory.

Another concomitant evil remains to be pointed out. In order to give greater extension to the book trade, and to promote the various branches of industry dependent on this kind of commerce, foreign and native booksellers were encouraged to establish themselves in Brussels; and a system of literary piracy was carried on to an immense extent. Cheap editions of almost every work prohibited in France and elsewhere were reprinted, and thus a multidude of pamphlets were disseminated through the country, containing doctrines most hostile to neighbouring governments, and essentially calculated to prejudice the public against the ruling administration. Here again the ministry were under the necessity of permitting the existence of this evil, or of placing restrictions on a trade which shed lustre on the metropolis, and added to the general commercial prosperity of the state.

CHAPTER V.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL SITUATION OF THE NETHERLANDS —THE "MILLION OF INDUSTRY"—ITS EFFECTS—ORANGEISTS OF GHENT AND ANTWERP.

No subject has given rise to greater diversity of opinion than the industrial and commercial condition of the Netherlands, during the two last years previous to the revolution. On the one hand, it has been represented as not only solidly flourishing and progressively improving, but as having attained such an extraordinary degree of perfection and activity as to render it an object of jealousy to Great Britain, with whom it was enabled to compete, and whom it could undersell in the foreign and colonial markets. Indeed, there are those who do not hesitate to attribute the line of policy adopted by Great Britain, in regard to the Belgic question, as solely dictated by the Machiavelic desire to ruin the growing Netherlands industry, which menaced British commercial monopoly.

On the other hand, a large body of political economists declare, that the manufacturing prosperity was not real; that it was supported by artificial means, that the produce infinitely exceeded the demand, and that a catastrophe must shortly have ensued. It was also said that, from the extensive encouragement given by government to industrial speculation, a hectic demand for labour was created, by which vast numbers of agricul-

tural hands were attracted to the towns, where they were subjected to the vicissitudes of commercial risks, and rendered partakers in that general lassitude and depression that prevaded all mercantile Europe during the two or three years preceding 1830.

Without going to the extreme lengths of either party, as regards the condition of Netherlands industry, it must be observed, that, whilst there is a certain degree of foundation for the assertion of both, the balance inclines to those who argue in favour of the prosperity of the country. For, there can be no doubt, that its average condition was prosperous and progressively improving; and yet not so solid as to enable it to proceed altogether without extraneous assistance. The collieries of Hainault and the Lower Meuse were in a state of full activity, with a constant demand from Holland and France. The armourers of Liege, and the clothiers of Verviers, were no less busily employed with extensive orders for the Levant, Germany, and South America. The mines and forges of Luxembourg, the cutleries of Namur, the silk weavers of Tournay and Brussels, the paper manufactories of the Upper Meuse, the refineries and cotton mills of Ghent, the linen trade of Courtray and Saint Nicholas, were all at work. Each succeeding day witnessed the erection of buildings, destined for manufacturing purposes, or was marked by the formation of new associations, for the exploitation of various novel sources of industry, either above or below ground.

But, although many of these establishments worked upon their own capital, were the *bonâ fide* property of their owners, and regulated their produce by the ordinary barometer of demand that ought to guide all prudent traders, yet there were great numbers that were unable to commence operations, or to continue business,

without the aid of government loans, and who, in lieu of gain, found great difficulty in refunding the annual instalments, which they were bound by contract to repay to government.* Thus, although the whole manufacturing body appeared, to a superficial observer, to be in a condition of unrivalled splendour, a portion was, in fact, bordering on bankruptcy, and must have discharged a third of their hands, and diminished their produce, had not the Society of Commerce stepped forward and purchased their goods; and this, with the conviction of being obliged to resell them at a certain loss; a measure which, though it relieved the individual, and thus enabled him to keep his workmen employed, of course saddled the difference on the country at large.

The great vice of the system of the "million of industry" was, that at least one-third of the manufacturers were thereby encouraged to push their produce beyond the demand or even possibility of immediate consumption; and as the government generally intervened, and purchased the excess, this led to a further glut in the market. Admitting, however, that the extreme anxiety of government to force produce, so as to bring it into competition with that of England, gave rise to many evils, and that it was highly impolitic to impose heavy prohibitive duties on commerce, in order wherewithal to subsidize manufactures, still the system was productive of some benefits; for, an extraordinary

* The totality of the sums lent to various individuals, under the head of "industriels," amounted to 10,459,900 francs, at three per cent., the capital to be reimbursed at various periods between 1830 and 1850. Of the above sum only 856,592 francs had been repaid at the epoch of the revolution. The establishment of Seraing, *of which the king was co-partner*, figures on the list for 2,523,000 francs, or a fifth of the whole; of which 12,500 francs only had been repaid.

spirit of industry and speculative emulation was aroused throughout the country. A mass of capital that would otherwise have lain dormant, was lavishly employed, and vast sums were expended in the purchase of primary matter, in the construction of factories, and in the consumption of innumerable articles of indigenous produce. Employment was given to a large portion of the population, the demand for fuel was augmented, and the value of the collieries and forests increased; a question of immense importance to Luxembourg and Liége, whose principal wealth is derived from the sale of wood, coal, and mineral productions.

It is generally admitted, by practical men, that the southern provinces had reason to be satisfied with the measures adopted by the king, as regarded the general industry of the kingdom. Some of the beneficial effects of that system are found to operate favourably at the present hour. For, although many of the minor establishments which existed solely by artificial means, have ceased to work, or now declare themselves to be in a languid state; such was the impulse given to industry, so great the spirit of speculation and exertion, that, notwithstanding the general produce is reduced about one-third, the remainder is gradually returning to that wholesome level, on which it ought to stand, and would have stood, had it been left to the unassisted development of its own powers. All that is wanting to restore it to its full state of vigour is, a few months of positive peace, good commercial treaties, and a judicious but not unlimited system of free trade. It would then maintain a condition, proportionate to its resources and population, producing every possible internal benefit, without awakening external jealousy.

On the whole, the system adopted by the king, must only be looked on as less politic, in a commercial, than

in a monarchical point of view; for, by means of the "million of industry,"—that is, either by lending assistance to distressed speculators, or by aiding others to commence business, and becoming as it were joint proprietors in many of the manufactories and industrial establishments—the crown created for itself a large body of devoted adherents, and of that class also which was the most calculated to counterbalance the spiritual influence of the Catholic clergy.

Thence it was, that Ghent and Antwerp continued loyal to the old government up to the latest moment, and thence it is that the whole Orangism of the country, may be said to be concentrated in these two cities.

There was another motive of policy connected with this system which deserves attention.* "Subjected by its traditions, its customs, and by the backward state of intelligence to the double influence of nobles and priests, Belgium not only preserved that habitual passive obedience to the clergy, which formed part of its moral habits, but that profound respect for the aristocracy, which taught the peasant to consider the nobility and extensive landed proprietors as their superiors before the law. Obedient by habit to the seigneurial lord or priest, even though both law and civilization had done every thing to detach him from them, the Belgian could only be abstracted from this double thraldom by two means intended to raise him to a level with the classes that oppressed him. By the diffusion of instruction and intelligence, it was possible to rescue the mass from clerical servitude; and by means of commerce and industry, it was equally possible to raise plebeian fortunes to a level with those of the aristocracy: it was

* "Dix Jours de Campagne. Par Charles Durand." Amsterdam, 1832.

therefore upon public education and industry that William founded his hopes of the material and moral emancipation of his people, *who nevertheless could not comprehend either his views or benevolent intentions.*"

No one will attempt to deny, if these conclusions were correct, that the project was founded on good sense and would have been highly advantageous, could it have been carried into effect; but, unfortunately for the king's government, the Belgians, whilst they acknowledged the benefits arising to the country from the development of commerce and industry, comprehended too clearly the views of the ministry, as regarded public instruction. Both nobility and clergy plainly saw that it was the intention to diminish their influence and to give such a turn to the mind of the youth of the country as tended to abstract them, not only from the religion of their forefathers, but from the control of those who had every right to consider themselves as the natural guardians of the rising generation. Thence arose the unbounded clamours of the chambers, press, and people against the trammels placed on public instruction, which they considered as an outrageous act of tyranny and oppression, far opposed to those benevolent intentions that were attributed to the government. It must, however, be remarked that the outcry against the "million of industry" was not so much raised against its use, as against the abuse of the sums voted under that head; the more so, since not a single fraction of the reimbursements or interests was ever placed to the credit of the country, and therefore this million might be considered as an addition to the civil list, or secret service-money.

As to what is termed the high commerce of Belgium, there could be but one opinion. The liberty of the Scheldt had restored Antwerp to a degree of spendour

not exceeded in the days of Charles V., and it was not without just cause that the Dutch merchants looked on it with infinite jealousy; for it appears that Antwerp did more business in every article of colonial produce, except tobacco, than Amsterdam and Rotterdam united. Upon this score, therefore, there could not have been a shadow of complaint in the southern provinces. Indeed the prohibitive duties, and restrictions to the liberty of free trade, so urgently demanded by the Belgians, and so energetically opposed by the Dutch, were grievances that fell entirely on the latter, who, for ages, had acted upon those principles of commercial liberty, that are now becoming more popular amongst all the most enlightened political economists throughout Europe, and are gaining ground even in Belgium.

Possessing a most fertile soil, extensive forests, and abundant mines, Belgium had devoted itself, from the moment that the treaty of Munster gave a death-blow to its commerce, to agriculture, and manufactures, and thus, during the reign of Maria-Theresa, and in despite of the continental system enforced by Napoleon, it enjoyed extreme prosperity; and having no maritime commerce, cherished the prohibitive system as the source of all its wealth.

On the other hand, Holland, possessing vast colonies, an extensive littoral, and a population more addicted to commerce than industry, drew its principal subsistence from foreign trade and navigation. Thence arose that direct conflict between the interests and views of the north and south. The one called for free trade; the other for prohibitive duties. The one turned its eyes to the ocean, where its numerous vessels navigated on a level with those of the most favoured nations; and the other looked inland, where its productions were placed on the same footing as those of France. The struggle that

took place in the States-General between the northern and southern deputies, upon every subject regarding taxation or commerce, sufficiently proved the utter dissidence of interests between the two parts of the kingdom; and as the prohibitive duties were maintained to the detriment of Holland, in this case at least the government could not be accused of partiality. Indeed the loudest outcries were uttered in Holland against a system which seriously affected their commerce, and gave just cause to affirm that, even supposing the desire for separation had not arisen in Belgium, the Dutch ere long would have been forced to call for this divorce, in order to save Amsterdam and Rotterdam from ruin.

The experience of fifteen years had proved that the congress of Vienna had closed the book of history, and, solely intent upon the projected wedlock, was utterly indifferent whether the two people about to be united were susceptible or not of amalgamation. Had the diplomatists of that day opened this book, had they for a moment considered the diversity of character, interests, habits, language, feelings, and religion, they would have seen that "fusion" was impracticable, and that the sentence of divorce was written in sympathetic ink between the lines of the marriage-contract. This ought to be well considered by the historian, for it clearly demonstrates that the task imposed on the king of the Netherlands was almost beyond the power of human strength, and that, however impolitic some of the measures adopted by his government, they did but inhance the vices inherent in a union, which, under almost any circumstances, could not have continued to exist beyond a few years.

As to the accusation brought against Great Britain, that is easily answered; for it is indisputable that the manufacturing prosperity of the Netherlands caused

little disquietude either at Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow. The British trader was well aware that, owing to the immense development of capital and machinery, the rapidity of communication, the abundance of fuel, the excellence of primary matter, and other concomitant causes in England, the Netherlands could not undersell him unless in certain articles of inferior quality; and this only with the assistance of the government. For the English manufacturer was enabled to deliver particular goods—cottons for instance—at 50 cents per yard, whilst the Ghenters could not afford to dispose of the same article under 60; consequently, in order to enable the trader to compete with England, the government, or society of commerce, was obliged to make up to him the difference between his prime cost and that of his British rivals; a ruinous process, sufficiently proving that Manchester had nothing to fear from the rivalry of Ghent.

Indeed it stands to reason that a national industry that cannot exist without a large subsidy from government, is a direct burthen, and not a source of immediate benefit to a kingdom. Thus the Dutch, who were a commercial and not a manufacturing people, had every right to complain of a system solely calculated to benefit Belgium.

Whatever might have been the flattering impression in the Netherlands, no well-informed Englishman ever supposed that such a nation as Great Britain with her immense wealth, her prodigious capital, her unparalleled enterprize, and boundless colonies, should dread the competition of a small country like the Netherlands; in which the germs of disunion were already so deeply implanted—a country whose colonies were as a mere grain of sand to those of Great Britain; whose merchants laboured under greater disadvantages of insurance

and freight, than affected those of England; whose manufacturers were subject to the same restrictive duties, as regarded France, Germany, and the Baltic, as those of Manchester and Glasgow, and who were obliged to receive their silks, wools, cottons, indigos, and other supplies of primary matter, from the sources whence England derived hers;—a country where, from peculiar geological causes and the necessity of employing wood in all mining constructions, the price of fuel at the pit-mouth was fully as expensive, and not always of as fine a quality, as that of England; and where the produce was certainly great, but where the issues were limited, and where, from fiscal pressure and other local causes, goods could not be brought into the market as cheap as in England.

But even admitting the durability of the union, and the possibility of successful rivalry at some subsequent period; what does that prove? Why, that the Netherlands were progressively improving, but not that the British government was actuated by the selfish and Machiavelic motives attributed to it by some of the exasperated partisans of the house of Nassau. No; the conduct of England was based on principles of much more elevated policy; a policy, adapted to the then inflamed and precarious position of Europe, and to her own moral and financial condition. Though, in a great measure, unprepared for the Belgic revolution, and still more so for the impolicy of the Netherlands statesmen, the want of energy and military skill of its generals, and the absence of decision subsequently evinced by the heir to the throne, and, above all, for the opposition of the king to the elevation of his son; still the British ministry, then under the Duke of Wellington, warmly sympathized with that government, and

deplored the issue the more deeply, since the union was, in a great measure, the child of its own creation.

Fortunately, however, for Great Britain and the peace of Europe, the Duke of Wellington was fully alive to the inflammatory gravity of the times, and the danger of forcibly attempting to resist the revolutionary torrent which then menaced all Europe. His object was to avert the horrors of war from England and Europe, and he saw that there existed every probability of gaining, by temporisation and negotiation, that desirable issue which could not possibly be attained by resistance. Profoundly versed in the history of his country, he was fully impressed with a sense of that fatal policy of preceding administrations, who, utterly regardless of the distress and misery entailed on posterity, had heedlessly urged Great Britain into that series of gratuitous conflicts, that have swollen her taxes to their present fearful amount, and crippled both the industry and energy of her people. Had it been otherwise—had his Grace been inclined to forget this, there was the national debt, like a monstrous *memento mori*, to warn him of the danger of plunging his country into further wars of intervention.

No! the Duke of Wellington saw that the time was gone by when a minister could venture down to the House of Commons, and there ask the country for supplies to foment continental wars no way concerning the honour or interests of Great Britain; or to prop up crumbling monarchies, whose impolitic sovereigns had wilfully torn down the royal banner that waved above their thrones;—monarchs who, having possessed, could not maintain; who, having grasped, could not hold; and who, however great their claims to sympathy as individuals, had not a shadow of title to one penny of British gold, as rulers of a foreign people. No! the

era was passed when an English minister, upon the first signal of civil commotion or continental contention, felt himself bound to interfere, and with Quixotic ardour squander the blood and treasure of Great Britain by intervening between sovereigns and their people, and this without the slightest chance of ultimate benefit to his own country.

The ideal grandeur of nations may depend on the triumphs of war, but the real foundation of all national splendour is essentially based on the maintenance of peace. The Duke of Wellington may be immortalized as a conqueror, but the most glorious achievements in his escutcheon are, firstly, the concessions made to the Catholics—concessions that the King of the Netherlands would have done well to imitate; and, secondly, that fine stroke of policy that prompted him to recognize the France of July, and thereby to save all Europe from a war, the bloodiest and most subversive that could be undertaken—a war of opinions. This system of non-intervention, or rather the substitution of diplomatic interference for that of the sword, forms a new feature in British policy, the beneficial results of which have been immense; and when party passion shall have softened down, and the historians can calmly and impartially refer to the records of the day, the Duke of Wellington will not reap less praise from having been the founder, or, at least, the first practical patron of this passive system, than for his mighty actions in the field of battle.

The recognition of Louis Philippe, and the refusal to interfere by force of arms in the Belgic question—a refusal peremptorily made by Lord Aberdeen in the early stage of the revolution—must not be taken so much as an acknowledgment of what is termed "the sacred right of popular insurrection," as an avowal that insular

England is not authorized to meddle in the intestine broils of continental Europe; or, although she may have been authorized, as was the case in September, 1830, by an appeal from the then legitimate government, that the policy and interests of the British people forbid her to employ any other weapons than the pens of her diplomatists. "Select what form of government you think proper," said the Duke of Wellington to the Belgian deputation, dispatched to England by the provisional government, "or whatever chief you may consider best calculated to effect the objects you have in view; providing you do not embroil yourself with Europe, we shall not interfere." Such was the system laid down by the Duke of Wellington and his administration in July and September, 1830, both in regard to France and Belgium; and it is this system that has been followed up by Lord Grey, and has constantly formed the basis of his policy.

It was the maintenance of European peace, and not the destruction of Netherlands industry, that formed the main-spring of English policy, and constituted the sole land-mark to which the efforts of the government and its diplomatic agents were invariably directed.

The issue has fully proved the wisdom and success of their endeavours; for, although they were surrounded by a thousand difficulties, although they were environed by the most contradictory interests and conflicting elements, and although nearly half a million of armed men stood with lighted matches and banners unfurled, panting for the onset, peace has been maintained—revolutionary passions have been calmed—the sword has returned bloodless to the scabbard—and, if changes have taken place, it has been in the representatives of monarchy, not in the monarchical system.

It was, doubtless, the earnest desire of Carlists and

Orangists, that Great Britain should have stood forward as the champion of legitimacy, both in Holland and France. It was immaterial to them whether public debts or private burthens should be increased in England, provided the British people consented to furnish subsidies of men, arms, and money; and thus added to that general agricultural and industrial depression which has opened the field of competition to other kingdoms. But, even supposing that they had found a willing instrument in a British ministry, or a people sufficiently blind to their own interests, to consent to saddle themselves with fresh privations in favour of any particular continental dynasty or doctrine, a moment's consideration must have shown that this could not be effected without the co-operation of the other great powers, and a renewal of the Holy Alliance.

But what was the then condition both of England and Europe? Great Britain, struggling for reform, was less inclined than ever to co-operate with foreign powers in a crusade against liberal institutions. Indeed, the government had no light task to stem that flow of radicalism and insubordination that manifested itself throughout the country, and caused so much uneasiness for Ireland. Austria had its hands fully occupied with Italy. Russia could not spare a man from Poland. Prussia was uncertain of its Rhenan provinces, and not altogether at ease respecting Silesia and the duchy of Posen. Hanover was disturbed by internal seditions, which required all the energy of government and the unbounded popularity of its prudent viceroy to quench; and the Rhenan states, bordering on France, were in a state of fermentation and disloyalty that demanded augmented garrisons and the severest measures of police. In fine, in the then moral condition of Europe, England might have furnished

money, but it is highly questionable if a single European state could have ventured to march an army across its frontiers without risking internal commotion, or drawing upon them the whole fury of united France, then in a state of effervescence and craving after movements little inferior to its military fever in the most brilliant days of the republic.

By firmly adhering to a prudent and pacific line of policy, Great Britain has indisputably stemmed the tide of democracy, and aided in strengthening constitutional monarchy. But this could not be effected without entailing upon her the odium of ultra-legitimists and ultra-liberals. The former eagerly demanded armed intervention, hoping that war would produce restoration, not so much for the sake of the dynasty as for the subsidies they received from the king's government. For the organs of Orangism may be said to be confined to a certain class of merchants, and to a few of the nobility, some of whom, strange to say, were conspicuous for their opposition to the king, and, to the present hour, look back to the days of the empire as the most prosperous for Belgium. But it is true their wives were ladies of honour to the empress, and they themselves were permitted to bask in the sunshine of the Tuileries. The latter—that is the ultra-liberals—cry aloud for vigorous measures, and sigh for further convulsion, because they gained nothing by the last revolution. With the majority of such men, country, national dignity, liberty, and patriotism are but mere empty words, destined to blind their tools—the people. The people! those deluded proletaries, who, on such occasions, serve but as mere instruments to the aggrandizement of ambitious and designing men, and who have little prospect of gaining any thing by overt revolution save a change of masters.

CHAPTER VI.

SYSTEM OF PETITIONS RESORTED TO IN THE FLANDERS—ANIMOSITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PETITIONERS—LAW RESTRICTING LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—MESSAGE OF 11TH DECEMBER—ORDER OF INFAMY—STATES GENERAL—UNION OF CATHOLICS AND LIBERALS IN THE CHAMBERS.—CONDUCT OF OPPOSITION—DE POTTER AND COLLEAGUES COMDEMNED TO BANISHMENT.

In despite of the general discontent that prevailed throughout the Belgic provinces, the people, up to the year 1828, had but sparingly availed themselves of the right of petition, accorded by the 161st section of the fundamental law. But the leaders of the "union" at length bethought themselves of employing this powerful and constitutional agent in its most extensive sense. It was in the wealthy and fruitful Flanders, which form nearly a third of the whole Belgic population, that the objects of the "union" had first been promulgated, under the auspices of De Potter and the Abbé de Foere. It was there also that the system of general petitions was first developed by Messrs. Bartels, Rodenbach, the Abbé de Haerne, and other influential persons who were most directly opposed to the government, and were, perhaps, the most hostile to the dynasty.

Meetings were held for this purpose in almost all the towns and villages. Petitions were drawn up, and left for signature at the newspaper offices, at the clubs, coffee-rooms, and other places of public resort. Every effort was made to obtain signatures by the laics, and

the clergy even exhorted their flocks from the pulpit to unite in the general cause. From the Flanders, the thirst for petitioning spread to Brabant and Hainault, and from thence to Namur, Liége, and the other provinces. The Prince Auguste d'Aremberg, the early friend and correspondent of Mirabeau, the Prince de Ligne, who had been educated under the influence of the jesuits, the duke D'Ursel, the Counts Robiano, De Mérode, D'Aerschot, Villain XIV., the barons Secus, Stassart, and many others of the nobility, either openly coalesced with, or indirectly encouraged, the petitioners. In a short time the steps of the throne and the tables of the States-General groaned beneath a load of petitions, containing nearly 500,000 signatures, equivalent to about one-eight of the whole Belgic population.

It is true that many of these petitions were the result of intrigue, and were tainted by those anomalies and abuses that are so often remarked and exposed, under similar circumstances in the British senate. But still the great majority of the signatures were of great respectability, and although few commercial names were affixed, they indisputably spoke the sentiments of the vast body of the most enlightened and influential citizens. It must still be remarked, that the spirit of the petitions was no ways directed against the throne, but against its *irresponsible* advisers, especially M. Van Maanen, who was universally branded as the evil genius of the country. Whatever diversity of opinion may have existed upon other points, upon this there was the utmost unanimity. It is the more lamentable that the sovereign should have turned a deaf ear to the public voice, however prejudiced, however unjust, since all parties now concur in stating that, if his Netherlands majesty could have made up his mind to remove this able, but unpopular minister from his councils, and

then forthwith have adopted a more conciliating system, as if the past had been entirely the work of the disgraced favourite, it would have been a fine stroke of policy, that would have augmented his own popularity, and most probably have averted all the evils that ensued.

From the impossibility of obtaining either the annual or decennial supplies for 1830, so long as the *mouture* and *abattage* taxes formed a part of the ways and means, the finance minister, after two repulses, had been induced to repeal these imposts towards the end of 1829, and even then was only enabled to pass his budget by a majority of one voice. But with the exception of the repeal of the above obnoxious taxes, and the cumpulsory use of the Dutch idiom, as well as a trifling modification of the edicts respecting the philosophic college, no further concessions could be obtained. Indeed, in lieu of receiving the petitions with outward demonstrations of good will, and thus making a virtue of necessity, the government displayed considerable irritation against the petitioners, and forthwith adopted the strongest repressive measures.

Finding the pre-existing laws and *arrêtés* insufficient to curb the license of the press, which pursued all the measures of the government, step by step, with harassing vigilance; being unable to silence the universal outcries that were conveyed to the foot of the throne, or to the States-General, in the shape of petitions, the ministers thought it expedient to propose a new project of law. But this was of a nature so vague and arbitrary, as to give it all the appearance of the most despotic gagging-bill, amply fulfilling the views of a ministerial writer, who had recently recommended that "the malcontents should be muzzled, and then scourged like mad dogs."

This projected law set forth that all "*moderdte*

(*bescheidene*) *judgments*" of the press would be permitted but "that any person, no matter in what manner, or by what means, who attacked the royal prerogative, or shewed contempt for the royal edicts, or aversion for the royal family, should be punished with imprisonment from two to five years. This bill, subsequently amended, passed into law on the 21st May, 1830, only six out of fifty-five Belgians having voted for it in its original form. The presentation of this project was accompanied by the celebrated message of the 11th December, 1829, which declared in substance that the constitution was an act of condescension on the part of the throne; that the King had restrained, rather than carried to excess, the rights of his house; that the press had been guilty of sowing discord and confusion throughout the state; and that the opposition was but the fanatic working of a few misguided men, who, forgetting the benefits they enjoyed, had risen up in an alarming and scandalous manner against a paternal government.

With this exception, the general tenor of the message contained nothing that could give umbrage to the nation; but, as it served as an introduction to the obnoxious project; as it set forth that the rights of the crown were superior to the fundamental law, from whence, according to the treaty of London, those rights were derived; as it stigmatized the opposition and petitioners as scandalous and ungrateful fanatics, and declared the press to be the advocate of disunion, religious hatred, and factious revolt, the most unbounded clamours rose on every side. From this moment, the opposition, which had been hitherto exclusively ministerial, assumed a more dangerous tendency—a tendency never publicly avowed, but which certainly rankled at the bottom of the hearts of some of the leading deputies.

The project and message were accompanied by a ministerial circular of the 12th December, and a cabinet order of the 8th January, 1830, which set the seal to public indignation. The first enjoined all persons holding any place or office under government to declare, within twenty-four hours, whether they adhered to the tenor of the message of the 11th December, and announced that all such as dissented from that message would be immediately dismissed. The second announced the destitution of several functionaries who had been connected with the petitioners, and declared the determination of the government to adopt the same rigorous measures against all others who should in any way cooperate with them in future. At the same time, circulars and secret instructions were issued to the governors of provinces, commissaires of districts, mayors, and other authorities, to institute the strictest investigation into the conduct of their subordinates, and to oppose, by every means in their power, the petitionary contagion. The result of these combined measures was not only the dismissal of several functionaries, but an increase in the number of prosecutions against the press.

The conduct of the government, in adopting these harsh measures, produced the utmost possible fermentation both in and out of the chambers; it was declared to be a direct violation of the right of petition and the liberty of the subject; and whilst Messrs. de Brouckère, Surlet de Chokier, and de Gerlache raised their voices against it in the states, the liberal press fulminated forth a succession of articles that aroused the indignation of the whole nation against their rulers.

But surely it was not intended by the framers of the fundamental law, or any other constitution, that government functionaries should be allowed to rise up with impunity against their employers, or be permitted to com-

bine against the very administration to whom they are indebted for whatever local influence they might possess.

Were such a system admitted, no minister could hold himself responsible for the march of his department. It would place the chief at the will of the subordinate, and utterly reverse the hierarchy of administration. However discordant or harsh such doctrines may sound to those who hold man, no matter what his position, to be a free agent, it is certain that if government had no check, no control over those beneath their orders, there would be an end to all administration. It is well to talk of liberty, but such a system of insubordination never could be tolerated in any state, no matter whether it were republican or monarchical, despotic or constitutional.

It may be a grievous hardship thus to enchain individual opinions; but it is an unavoidable necessity, a necessity acted upon under the convention, the consulate, the empire, the restoration, and government of Louis Philippe in France, and under every successive ministry in England since the revolution. Nay, the most enlightened and liberal English journals have urgently called on Lord Grey's administration, not only to dismiss all such persons as voted or acted against them, but those even who passively differed in politics. This anathema has been demanded, not only against all persons holding high functions, but even against those filling subordinate situations. The Netherlands government might have granted the concessions so earnestly prayed for by the petitioners, and this would have been the wisest course; but to permit itself to be bearded by its own agents, and to remain passive, whilst these agents overtly coalesced with its adversaries, would have been inconsistent with the duty it owed itself and the crown.

If the measures of any given administration be op-

posed to the principles or conscience of a functionary; if he consider the ministry under whom he holds place as unworthy of confidence, and acting hostilely to the interests of the people, let him resign. But it is contrary to all reason, and utterly at variance with all order and unity of administration, for governments to allow their agents to exert the influence they may derive from their official functions, in counteracting the measures of the ministry, and thus, as it were, turning their own weapons against themselves.

Another circumstance of considerable interest, connected with the petitions, occurred during the year 1829. With a view of rallying public opinion, and sounding the loyalty of the people in the provinces, who were far from being hostile to the royal family, it was considered advisable for the king to make a tour through the country; on which occasion, he was generally received with the most satisfactory demonstrations of devotion and respect. However, during the royal sojourn at Liege, an incident took place which bore the strongest analogy to the occurrence that gave rise to the foundation of the celebrated confederation of the *beggars* * in 1566. It appears that, in despite of the efforts of the authorities, who, if not sincerely devoted to the government, were eager to show every possible mark of respect to the monarch, his majesty was met, at almost every step, by individual or collective petitions, some of which were as unreasonable in their demands, as unguarded in their language. Being irritated at the contents of one of these documents, the monarch, for a moment, lost that self-possession for which he was so remarkable, and

* It is almost superfluous to remind the reader, that the great confederacy of the *Gueux* is said to have owed its origin to the petitioners having been likened to a parcel of beggars by the courtiers of the Regent.

casting from him the paper, is said to have exclaimed—"It *is* infamous!" This hasty exclamation was instantly caught up by some of the bystanders; and thus an expression, intended to be applied to one isolated fact, was converted into a purposed insult against the whole body of petitioners.

This expression, repeated from mouth to mouth, and propagated by the journals, soon found its way into the Flanders, which provinces felt themselves singularly aggrieved, since they had been the birthplace of the petitionary system. Consequently, some of the most influential and enterprising "unionists," who were not entirely exempt from personal and interested motives, in the animosity they entertained against the king, and who were warmly excited by the celebrity attached to the memory of the founders of the mendicant confederacy, proposed to imitate the conduct of Bréderode, and to establish an association to be styled the *Order of Infamy*. This singular proposition being well received, a committee was appointed with powers to draw up the statutes, and to take steps for secretly obtaining proselytes. In a few days the number of members that enrolled themselves in the Flanders exceeded 100, and when the revolution broke out the order had extensive ramifications in different parts of the country.*

Independent of the secret meetings of the "order of Infamy," assemblies were held, and banquets given in different parts of the country, the avowed object of which was either to recompense such public men as were con-

* The insignia consisted of a silver medal in the form of an open book, intended to represent the fundamental law. On one leaf was inscribed the word "*Lex*," and underneath "*Fideles jusqu'à l'infamie;*" on the other "*Rex*," with "*infamia nobilitat.*" On the upper part was engraved "*Loi fundamentale, A.* 151—161," alluding to those two articles guaranteeing the right of petition.

sidered victims of ministerial oppression, or to raise subscriptions for such publicists as had been condemned to fine or imprisonment. Although these subscriptions rarely attained the sum required, it was arranged by the committee to publish a statement, by which the amount of patriotic offers was declared to exceed the maximum of the fine. Upon all occasions of meeting, speeches were delivered, verses sung, and toasts uttered, expressive of the popular antipathy to the ministry. But precautions were taken to prevent any extreme act of indiscretion, since it was an established rule that all toasts, speeches, and couplets should be previously submitted to a commission, who were authorized to revise or reject such as were calculated to embroil the parties directly with the government, or subject them to prosecution.

One of the most remarkable of these banquets occurred at Bruges, on the 9th of July, 1829, in honour of Count Villain XIV. and M. de Meulenaere; the one a wealthy and popular nobleman of the high Catholic party, the other an eminent jurisconsult, universally esteemed by his countrymen in the Flanders. Both had distinguished themselves by their opposition in the States-General, and having thus excited the animosity of the government, a successful effort was made to throw them out of the representation at the elections of 1829.

The avowed purport of the Bruges banquet was to present the unsuccessful candidates with a medal, expressive of the esteem of their constituents, but the real object was to obtain increased subscriptions for the confederation, and to afford an opportunity to the subscribers of proclaiming their aversion to the administration, and of combining to promote its overthrow. "At this banquet," says a Flemish publicist, "were engendered those projects that were to be executed at a later period;

there also were firmly cemented those principles of union that were destined to produce the triumph of liberty."

It must again be observed, notwithstanding the establishment of the "order of Infamy," and the incessant means adopted by the chiefs of the union and their agents, to depopularize the king, that few voices were raised against him or his dynasty. Indeed, it is as impossible to reconcile the loyalty of the toasts, songs, and speeches uttered at the different banquets, with the implacable hostility evinced for the Nassau dynasty at a later period, as it is to reflect on the then popularity of the sovereign and not to feel convinced that nothing but a series of fatalities, and a succession of the most injudicious conduct, could have alienated from him the esteem and loyalty of the vast mass of the nation.

A dispassionate investigation of all the circumstances preceding and even attendant on the revolution, up to the very attack on Brussels, must convince any impartial person that the war of opposition was not so much against the dynasty as against the obnoxious measures pursued by its agents, and that the loyalty felt for the Nassau family must have been much more deeply engrafted throughout the nation, than is now admitted in Belgium. For had it been otherwise, the king could not have retained the slightest portion of the popularity he enjoyed even to the spring of 1830, after sanctioning a succession of ministerial acts that rendered the government odious to the country, and which were in truth sufficient to have alienated the affections of the people, even though his dynasty had been as long established, and had as many claims to popular affection in Belgium as it had in the old Netherlands.

"Give the labouring classes bread," says an eminent Dutch political economist, "and no intrigues will se-

duce them from their allegiance." This maxim furnishes a solution for the peaceable and loyal conduct of the lower orders up to a late moment; for, in consequence of the immense impulse given to the manufactories, and the purchases made by the society of commerce, the great mass of the industrial population found constant occupation; and this upon average wages that exceeded by nearly *two-thirds* the absolute individual wants of the labourer. It is true the statistical returns of the period present, at first sight, a large proportion of indigent persons receiving relief from the various benevolent institutions. But, although the cypher of poor amounted to nearly 690,000, or about one-ninth of the population, it must be borne in mind, that there were not more than 46,000 absolute paupers, including prisoners, foundlings, and lunatics. The remainder, including the charity schools, were only partially assisted at their own abodes; the average relief to each individual not exceeding the trifling sum of five florins annually, including medicine and other assistance in kind. *

It is not, however, attempted to deny the existence of considerable distress at this epoch, for the Netherlands were not exempt from that commercial lassitude that oppressed all Europe. But it may be safely affirmed, on examining the average condition of the labouring classes, that no state in Europe presented a more flattering picture of comfort, ease, and general prosperity. It is true the working population were taxed highly, but they were paid in proportion, and were consequently contented. Passionate and prejudiced men may attempt to ascribe this comparatively happy state of affairs to the

* "Recherches sur la Population, &c. &c. des Pays Bas. Quetelet." Brussels, 1829.

fertility of the soil, to the frugal and laborious habits of the people, and to other natural advantages, with which providence has blessed this beautiful country. But impartial persons cannot refuse to the government its due meed of praise for the impulse and development it gave to the various branches of industry and agriculture; without which impulse, neither the surprising fruitfulness of the land, nor the industry of the people, could have produced any beneficial result.*

The real fact is, that the focus of discontent lay not with the people, who were paid beyond their absolute necessities, but with the Catholics and legal profession. For, notwithstanding the ardent workings of the press; in despite of the intrigues and machinations of those who thirsted for convulsion, and of those few who were leagued with the Parisian propaganda; and in defiance of the odious and insupportable nature of some of the grievances, "the union" found the utmost difficulty in exciting the lower orders: nor was it until the execution of the ill-advised and worse-conducted attack on Brussels that any serious impression could be produced on the masses. It is not less true, however, that, when once excited, the flame spread with astounding rapidity. The surface of the ground teemed with infuriated thousands; the very bowels of the earth sent forth their legions, and in proportion as the hatred to the dynasty was

* The total value of the establishments then devoted to the fabrication of cotton goods in Belgium is estimated at 62,677,300 francs, including the buildings, machinery, &c. These establishments employ annually about seventeen millions of pounds of raw cotton, estimated at nearly 18,000,000 francs. This produces upwards of fifteen millions of pounds of cotton twist, which is converted into 1,194,333 pieces of diverse tissues. The remainder is absorbed by other trades. The value of this cotton thus manufactured is estimated at from seventy to eighty millions of francs, say three millions sterling. The number of individuals directly employed averages 221,866.

sudden, so was the conflagration the more inextinguishable and overwhelming.

Having traced the march of events out of doors, it may not be uninteresting to offer a rapid outline of the proceedings of the representatives of the people in the States-General. Unaccustomed to that systematic perseverance, that unity of action, that unremitting vigilance which forms the basis of party tactic in England; being unpractised in that extemporary eloquence, or that promptitude of explanation and reply, which constitutes the essence of debate, and which is so essential to parliamentary success; divided amongst themselves, not only in matters of religion, but upon many important points of internal administration and political economy; having in view local interests rather than general benefits; being representatives of special doctrines and provincial exigencies, rather than of enlarged systems and national necessities; being desirous also to succeed by remonstrance and expostulation, rather than by violent resistance and agitation,—the Belgic portion of the States-General offered no concentrated or regular opposition to government during the first four or five sessions, except in one or two peculiar cases; such, for instance, as the debates on the *mouture*, on the game-laws, and on a few other questions that directly interested the whole of the southern provinces. Isolated cases of continued resistance here and there occurred; but there was no unity, no connexity of efforts; and the jealousy existing between the liberals and Catholics—a jealousy fomented by a portion of the press, and artfully encouraged by the government—caused a constant dissonance of views, amounting to a schism between the two fractions of the opposition, and thus rendered them both innoxious to the ministry.

On the other hand, the Dutch moiety, though not

better versed in extempore eloquence, or in parliamentary tactic, were more united in purpose, and more instinctively systematic in their coalision. Cool, calm, and methodical, they discarded all theories, and based their demands and arguments on practical principles, sanctioned by long experience and an intimate knowledge of what was necessary for the interests of their fellow-citizens. Invariably clinging together, on no occasion did they make a single concession of those interests, or appear inclined to sacrifice the welfare of a part for that of the whole. They seemed never to lose sight of their individuality, or to forget that they were no longer Dutchmen, but Netherlanders. With the exception of three or four extraordinary cases of liberality, they formed a compact phalanx that rarely failed to aid the minister in carrying into effect any proposed measure; and it was thus, that the government was enabled to pass many of those laws which were the cause of such unbounded discontent in Belgium.

It is not intended to insinuate that the Dutch deputies were animated with a malevolent desire to undermine the prosperity of the southern provinces, or that their object in voting in favour of certain measures was the result of any preconcerted plan to oppress their fellow-countrymen. For, on minutely examining the nature and action of any given measure, it will be seen that their votes were perfectly in unison with the views and interests of the north, though perhaps utterly opposed to those of the south. Being placed between the necessity of sacrificing the interests, or of voting against the popular voice of one party or another, it is unnatural to suppose that the Dutch would hesitate between the choice of the two alternatives, or that they should refrain from leaning towards their own countrymen.

But here we have a further proof, not of malevolence on the part of the Dutch, but of the false position in which the king and government were placed in regard to the nation, and this not so much from any error of their own as from the force of events, and the inherent vices in the union. It is a further demonstration of the difficulty of ruling two people so diametrically opposed to each other in interests, habits and religion, by the same code; and of the fallacy of attempting to unite them under the same legislative or administrative system.

It was not until the year 1828 that the Belgic opposition commenced to assume a definite character in the second chamber; that of the first, whose members were named by the king for life, and whose sittings were not public, was of little comparative importance; for, with the exception of the Marquis of Trazegnies, the Count d'Aerschot, and one or two others, the whole body were devoted to the will of the crown, voted as the government directed, and might be considered as a mere chamber of record.

Until the "union" was effected, the opposition had been divided into two distinct categories—liberal and Catholic; the one occupying itself principally with theories of general liberty, the other with questions more directly concerning the Catholic faith, and the immediate interests of the clergy. The former were represented by M. Charles de Brouckère, a man of rare abilities, but of exalted mind. With him were united M. Lehon, Surlet de Chokier, De Stassart, De Meulenaere, Fallon, and others of minor note. The Catholic party was headed by M. de Gerlache, an eminent jurisconsult, remarkable for the ability with which he advocated the cause of the church, of which he was a most zealous and devoted defender.

This party counted in its ranks the venerable Baron Secus, and others, who, though not the most distinguished for their talents or eloquence, possessed greater influence with the public than the collateral fraction. The correspondence of De Potter and Tielemans sufficiently shews the importance attached to the power and weight of these deputies, especially Baron Secus, by what may be termed the revolutionary party.

No sooner were the principles of the "union" adopted by the opposite portions of the Belgic representatives, than their opposition assumed a much more formidable aspect; and, although not always devoid of exaggeration, or pre-eminent for the soundness of its political views, it became extremely harassing and dangerous to the government from the systematic concert with which it pursued its object. Having, moreover, combined with the press and the great body of the petitioners, the opposition threw off the mask, and unhesitatingly declared its determination to overthrow the ministry, to wrest from government the concessions called for by the people, or to refuse the supplies. Thus, the budget of 1830 was twice rejected, and eventually only passed by a majority of one voice, which voice was declared to have been obtained by a manœuvre of government.

The session of 1829-1830 being held at the Hague, the Belgian deputies adopted the parliamentary tactic in use in England; they marshalled their forces, appointed leaders, and distributed to each member his peculiar station, according to the nature of his talent, or the especial interests he was bound to defend. A constant correspondence was also maintained with Brussels and other parts of Belgium, by which the deputies—some of whom contributed to the journals—were informed of the march of public opinion,

and instructed to touch on such points as were best calculated to produce effect, and to arouse the sympathies of the public.

Although the acrimony and ardour of the opposition daily displayed itself during the spring session of 1830, still this opposition was exclusively anti-ministerial, and not directed against the dynasty. There were here and there certain members who, from motives of personal pique, or from religious fanaticism, bore direct ill-will to the king; but, nevertheless, on every occasion, the utmost reserve was maintained in speaking of the crown, although the acts under discussion—such, for instance, as the message of the 11th of December—were known to emanate from the royal will. It had, however, been arranged by the leading unionists, in and out of the chambers, that a popular movement should be got up at Brussels in the month of October; but this again was intended rather with the view of intimidating the Dutch deputies, who would then be assembled for the ordinary session, and thus urging them to join in voting for a redress of certain grievances, than with any view of expressing hostility to the dynasty.

It was in this frame of mind that the Belgian deputies quitted the Hague in June, but not without seeing their efforts, and those of the petitioners crowned with a certain degree of success; for a cabinet order, dated the 4th of June, entirely restored the liberty of the idiom, and another of the 27th of May annulled some of the restrictions on public education. But these concessions were regarded as signs of weakness rather than of generosity; and the benefits they conferred were not sufficient to efface the trace of the evils they had inflicted on the public during a course of so many years. "Singular contradiction!" says a writer in the *Courrier des Pays*

Bas, in publishing these edicts; "the government, whilst it declares our grievances to be *pretended*, and our opposition factious, has thus acknowledged the reality of these grievances by redressing them, and has confirmed the justice of the cause of the *faction* by yielding to its legitimate complaints. It has given the lie to itself, in thus repairing *to-day* the evil whose existence it refused to admit *yesterday*. It is thus that the *mouture* tax has disappeared from the budget, that a tax on coffee announces a system less unfavourable to the agricultural interests of the southern provinces, and that a cabinet order has struck the first blow to the monopoly of education, which was yesterday declared to be a prerogative or regal right of the crown."

The good effect likely to be derived from these concessions was completely counterbalanced by the activity and frequency of the press prosecutions. *De Potter*, *Tielemans*, *Bartels*, and *De Neve*, were condemned to eight years' banishment; and, however just their sentence, their punishment excited universal sympathy, and was made use of by the "union" as a further instrument of excitement. In lieu of De Potter being considered as a factious democrat, whose secret object was, undoubtedly, to overthrow the throne and government, and to raise himself to supreme power; instead of Tielemans's conduct being judged with that just severity which his ingratitude to his benefactor so richly merited; in lieu of Bartels and De Neve being condemned as exaggerated enthusiasts, whose mission was to preach subversion and a hatred to all but republican institutions,—all were held up as holy and disinterested martyrs—victims to the liberties of their country. Thus, subscriptions, amounting to several thousand francs, poured in from the different provinces, and many

families declared their intention of contributing annual sums for the relief of the exiles; and thus fresh combustible matter was daily added to that dangerous mine that was soon destined to rend the two nations asunder, and to produce one of the most complete social and political revolutions which stand recorded in the pages of history.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARACTER OF THE KING OF THE NETHERLANDS—PRINCE OF ORANGE—PRINCE FREDERIC—ROBBERY OF THE PRINCESS OF ORANGE'S JEWELS—SOCIAL POSITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS—THEIR CONDUCT TO STRANGERS.

It is a bold measure to touch upon a subject of such extreme delicacy as the character and conduct of contemporary sovereigns or their families. But, in the present instance, it is important to shew what may be considered the prevailing opinion of the vast majority of the Belgic people; and the more so, since the private conduct of the king and his family are intimately connected with, and most materially influenced by, the events preceding and subsequent to the revolution. It was, for instance, the admirable private conduct of the king that counterbalanced much of the impolicy of his public acts; whilst, on the other hand, the sinister rumours that were spread about the Prince of Orange, during the latter period of the union, augmented the difficulties that were thrown in the way of his partisans at a later period.

Besides, in venturing to speak of princes, it may be said that they are public property, without privacy or retirement. Their whole existence is one series of exposure and exhibition. They are scarcely permitted a moment which they may call their own; it is one of the

miseries attendant on their exalted position, that the public is not content with following them step by step through all the movements of official life, but is constantly intent on scrutinizing their private acts, or interpreting, as best suits its own views, their most insignificant observations, and, pursuing them into the recesses of their innermost privacy, would even tear from them their very thoughts. Bacon says, that "of all menkind, God is the least beholden to kings, for he doth most for them, and they do ordinarily the least for him." One might add, on the other side, at least as far as regards constitutional sovereigns, that of all sorts of men, they are the least beholden to the people; for in free countries they are the only persons that are enslaved, and that have neither the liberty to act, think, or decide for themselves; having, in fact, no other will than that which emanates from the popular voice. It is true, they have a nominal power, and are surrounded by a halo of artificial splendour. They likewise exist upon, what is termed, the sweat of the people; that is, each individual contributes a few pence—and it is but a few pence—to the maintenance, not of the physical king, but of his moral crown. But the contributor is a thousand times more at ease than the receiver, "for even as the latter is of the highest estate, so is he subject to the greatest cares, and made the absolute servant of his people." But our business is not to write a treatise on the vexations of the kingly office, but to sketch the conduct and character of the Netherlands sovereign, and thence to show the grounds on which were founded the popularity enjoyed by himself and family.

Convinced that the power and grandeur of nations depend in a great measure on the extent of their commercial and industrial activity, and taking as his model "*that people of shopkeepers*," whose colossal influence

is mainly derived from this source, King William devoted the entire energies of his mind to the formation and impulsion of trade, manufactures, and commerce in all their diverse and most extensive branches. The leading object of his ambition—an ambition founded on the most wholesome principles of political economy—was to render the Netherlands as distinguished for its artificial productions, as its soil is pre-eminent for its fertility and the abundance of its natural produce. There was no labour, no expense, no care, no experiment left unemployed, to give life and excitement to this grand object. Project succeeded project, speculation followed speculation with surprising rapidity; and if many of these plans terminated in failure, enough has been already said to prove that two out of three were crowned with success, or promised beneficial results.

The favourite theories and meditations of the royal mind being, as it were, concentrated upon commercial pursuits and the employment of capital, he was said to display less of elevated sentiments and political grandeur, than of that arithmetical positiveness which is the general result of a constant devotion to the study of the practical branches of political economy. One engrossing topic was uppermost in his mind, which was compared to a vast "price-current," the barometer of which was solely influenced by the rise and fall of colonial and indigenous produce, or the fluctuations of the public funds. The inventions of Watt and Bolton stood higher in his estimation than the achievements of Frederick or Napoleon; and the most insignificant writer on subjects of political economy or practical philosophy, was infinitely more worthy of attention than Byron or Chateaubriand. He protected the arts, not so much from admiration as policy; and he countenanced literature, not from any devotion to letters, but because it created a demand for cer-

tain articles of commerce. The rattling, dinning sounds of a Ghent cotton-factory, or the monotonous vibrations of a Luxembourg forge-hammer, was sweeter music to his ears than the most melodious strains of Rossini or Beethoven The gaunt chimneys vomiting forth clouds of dark smoke above some graceless refinery, were fairer objects of architecture to his sight than the splendid columns of the Parthenon or the dome of St. Peter's. In short, there was nothing classic, inspiring, or chivalrous in his bearing; all was material, positive, and mathematical.

Business was his element, his recreation. Amusements were but a loss, a kind of robbery of that time which he thought he ought to devote entirely to his people. Thus, whether at the festive board, or in the drawing-room, he was always absorbed by one object—seeking out those who could most ably converse with him on his favourite topics—he either communicated or received information on points of national interest. For this reason, he loved to surround himself by practical men, and gained the good will of all the great commercial and financial aristocracy, by the attention he paid to them individually and collectively.

Early in his hours, sober and simple in his habits, an enemy to extravagance and ostentation, punctual in his engagements, and minutely exact in the distribution of his time, he was enabled to perform such a mass of business as would appear incredible to persons who were not witnesses to the amount and diversity of his daily occupations. There was scarcely an affair of the most trifling nature, any way connected with foreign affairs or internal administration, of which he did not take cognizance, and in most cases determine according to his own views. This application was not, however, more remarkable than his intimate acquaintance with

the most minute fractions composing the machinery of state, or his perfect familiarity with international law, and the various sources whence other nations derived the sum of their strength and prosperity. His facility of access, the promptitude of his answers, his blunt frankness, and his irreproachable domestic qualities, are admitted by all; except such liberals as M. de Potter, who thus declares his opinion, not so much of King William as of all sovereigns. "I participated," says he in his 53d letter, produced on his trial, "with all people past, present, and future, in the most profound aversion for the *tyrants à pretension* (*i. e.* sovereigns), under whom the laws *have* condemned, *do* condemn, and *will* ever condemn them to live."*

But although few persons could go the length of M. de Potter (who with much modesty also declared, "that he thought he was of equal value as the king, and *un poco mas;* that there was more honour and conscience in himself than in all kings and their valets united; that he only saw in kings the *born enemies* of all human dignity, and in short of every thing, save the vile slaves who prostitute themselves to their caprices, and alone reap their favours and prodigalities, or what they call their honours);" still his majesty was generally accused of a phlegmatic coldness of manner, of an overweening fondness for money, of never being able to forget that he was a Dutchman and a Protestant—in fact, of identifying in his own person all the prejudices of his country and faith. Added to this, he evinced a tenacity of opinion, bordering upon obstinacy; so, that having once adopted any system —and he was not prone to decide impetuously—no argument could shake his resolution. Another most striking

* "Procès de De Potter, Tielemans," &c. Vol. i., page 125. Brussels, 1830.

defect in the royal character was his unseasonable employment of energetic measures. The development of force was said with him to be aconstant an achronism. This has been verified in a striking manner, during the different phases of the revolution, from the night of the 26th August, 1830, to the burning of the arsenal and entrepôt of Antwerp; and from the invasion of Belgium in 1831, to the retention of Lillo and Liefkenshoek in 1833. The latter has, indeed, been an incomprehensible stroke of policy, desired by and evidently advantageous to his adversaries. The fact certainly is, that when energetic measures, promptly and vigorously applied, might have produced incalculable results, recourse was had to temporization; and again, when the development of force was but a vain waste of blood and treasure, it was then that negociation was abandoned.

It is incontestible, however, that if the happiness and welfare of a nation had depended on the laborious exertions and unremitting devotion of the sovereign to state affairs, then Belgium ought to have been as contented as it was prosperous, and its monarch the most popular sovereign in Europe; more especially, as no king could be more fortunately seconded than he was by his queen and her family.

The Prince of Orange, whose chivalrous valour in the field could only be surpassed by his courteous affability and gaiety in social intercourse, was for a length of time a general favourite throughout the southern provinces, until a succession of painful fatalities tended to lower him in public estimation. Loving the country and the people, whose gayer manners were more suited to his age and buoyant character than the graver phlegm of his Dutch countrymen; preferring his lovely palace at Brussels, his beautiful residence at Terveuren, and the gaieties of the Belgian metropolis to the monotonous

formalities that distinguish the court at the Hague; being moreover anxious, from inclination and policy, to captivate the good will of people whom he was destined to reign over, and without whose good will there could be no double reunion, no solidity for the barrier throne, his royal highness showed a decided predilection for the south, and this to such a degree as to excite the jealousy of the Dutch, who were not backward in criticising his conduct.

Fond of the diversions natural to youth, he was always eager to promote amusements, and to render the city of Brussels a point of pleasing attraction to strangers, as well as a place of agreeable residence to the aristocracy of the country. By this means he obtained the regard of the Belgian youth; and as he spent his money liberally, he was idolized by the tradespeople and admired by the lower orders, who were pleased at hearing of the brilliancy of his fêtes, and witnessing the beauty of his horses and equipages. Too frank to disguise his preference for the Belgians, or his dissidence from the system pursued by his father's ministers, he was said to have strongly remonstrated with the king on these subjects; and thence arose a coolness between them, that more than once degenerated into open rupture. Indeed, on one occasion, report stated that this had been carried so far, that the prince, having vainly opposed the adoption of some measure connected with the war department, of which he was then minister, and having declared that he would not hold himself responsible for what he considered to be an act of injustice, he broke out into terms of violent reproach, and losing all command over himself, burst from the royal presence, and tearing the epaulettes from his shoulders, resigned his office This anecdote, whether true or unfounded, was publicly credited, and served to endear him still stronger to the

army and to the people. His royal highness was, moreover, a liberal and enlightened protector of the arts; the exquisite specimens of the great masters that adorned his fairy palace at Brussels were sufficient proofs that a noble liberality, tempered by consummate judgment, guided him in his selection.

At the same time, the Princess of Orange, though possessing much of that reserved dignity, the natural result of the imperial education of St. Petersburg, was pre-eminent for her grace, mildness and benevolence—for her irreproachable virtue, her cultivated and accomplished mind, her abstinence from all court intrigues, and her devoted attention to her duties as wife and mother, and the prudence she displayed on many trying and critical occasions. Indeed it may be said of the whole of the female branches of the royal family, that they presented a model of all that could be honoured in princesses, and respected in women. The queen, a woman of sound judgment, extensive literary attainments, and numerous accomplishments, bore a strong affinity in manner and character to her august brother, the sage and prudent sovereign of Prussia. The proverbial virtues of that monarch's deceased consort, the lamented Lousia Augusta of Strelitz, were revived in his daughter, the Princess Frederick; whilst the young and joyous Princess Mariane, who had been educated with the most devoted attention by the Countess Bentinck, under the eye of the queen, was all that a king could desire in a child, or a prince in his bride.* Such at least was the portrait drawn by every impartial person, and this was a concession torn even from those most opposed to the government; for these

* The princess Louisa Augusta of Prussia, married to prince Frederick of the Netherlands. The princess Mariane, married to prince Albrecht of Prussia.

illustrious ladies being chaste, benevolent, and pious, and essentially devoted to the fulfilment of their domestic duties, literally "conquered" public admiration. There is every ground for presuming that this description is no ways exaggerated, since not even the most violent Catholics or ultra-liberals have ever ventured to utter one word of calumny against them; no, not even amidst the most furious excitement of the revolution, nor at the moment when Prince Frederick occupied the heart of the city, and was vainly wasting the blood of his own soldiers and imprudently spilling that of the citizens.

Unfortunately, however, the Prince of Orange was not always restricted within the limits of that prudence which became his exalted position and future prospects, as expectant sovereign of a jealous and discontented nation, differing from him and his dynasty in religion. The extreme affability of his manner was well suited perhaps to a people like the English, who are accustomed to see the princes of the blood royal moving amongst them without ostentation or pageantry; now placing themselves in the midst of the citizens at public meetings, now putting themselves on a level with their brother peers in the legislature, and now living on terms of courteous intercourse, devoid of familiarity, with persons of ordinary rank in society. But this affability was ill-adapted to the usages and antecedents of the Belgians; who, though clamorous for liberty, and jealous of a jealous arisoctracy, had known nothing of the Imperial Family whilst they were under the dominion of the house of Austria, than through the medium of the arch-duchesses, governors-general, who maintained all the rigid etiquette usually attendant on vice-royal courts; or, whilst under the sceptre of Napoleon, combined all their ideas of sovereignty with the thundering of cannon, the

glittering of Mamaluke sabres, and the grim looks of those valiant guards who had carried their victorious eagles into all the principal capitals of continental Europe. To such persons the condescending greeting of a prince of the blood was incomprehensible; and, therefore, the frank, open-hearted affability of the Prince of Orange appeared to degenerate into familiarity, and to be inconsistent with the dignity of his elevated rank.

It was also affirmed that his royal highness was not always guided by the soundest discretion in the choice of his favourites, and that he had admitted to his confidence men who were neither of that rank, character, or station in life that befitted the intimate companions of the heir to the crown. Rumours likewise found their way into public, of domestic dissensions between the prince and his consort; the regularity of his conduct was questioned, and reports of an injurious and indecorous nature were created abroad. These reports were eagerly seized on by the leaders of the "union" and opposition press, and were propagated by some of the aristocracy, who, being out of favour at Court, eagerly supported and sympathized with the prince on all occasions when he acted in opposition to the government. Some, nevertheless, gladly availed themselves of the most trifling occasions to vilify him in the public opinion; for there were a few amongst them who, from personal or religious motives, entertained a direct and invincible antipathy against the whole dynasty. Thus, while some persons were shocked at his reported indiscretions, others blamed his lavish extravagance; and others again, mistaking the natural buoyancy of his character for inveterate frivolity, and his aversion to the ministerial system for a disinclination to business, accused him of a want of application, laxity of character, and a general levity and instability of purpose and con-

duct that did not augur well for their future king. But, as he was said to be on indifferent terms with his father, and as this schism had arisen from his defending the popular cause; as he appeared to be purposely excluded from participating in state affairs, and as his predilection for the southern provinces was undiminished, the mass of the people, especially those of the capital, attributed much of the unfavourable reports to malevolence, and always preferred him to the Prince Frederick.

This prince, who differed considerably in manner and character from his elder brother, was supposed never to interfere in external politics, or internal state questions that were not immediately connected with the war department, of which he was director. He was said to be not less remarkable for his attention to business, his punctuality, and regular habits, than his father, of whom he was a decided favourite, and whose leading characteristics for economy, prudence, and phlegmatic reserve, he appeared to inherit. Devoting himself exclusively to his official duties, and being one of those who appear to attach greater value to the multiplication than the simplification of labour; who judge of merit not so much by the matter as by the mass of business performed in their offices, the prince created for himself and his subordinates an infinity of labour that might often have been dispensed with, and thus scarcely allowed himself time for healthful relaxation, or that leisure which he was otherwise desirous to pass in the bosom of his family, or in the domestic circle of the queen. His royal highness was retired, shy, preoccupied, and as cold and formal in his manner as his brother was light, graceful, and unaffected; but he had a benevolent heart, and was praised by the officers of the army for his assiduous devotion to his duties, for the promptitude of his answers to their applications,

and for the patience with which he listened to their requests.

Aided by the chief of the staff, General Constant de Rebeque, who had served with the British army in Spain, as aide-de-camp to the Prince of Orange, and who, though an inferior stratagist, was looked on as an officer well versed in the official routine of military administration, the prince had succeeded in placing the Netherlands army on a footing of great apparent efficiency. He introduced a wholesome and economical system of discipline and internal distribution, as far as regarded the general organization and mode of recruitment, which was modelled on that of the Prussian landwher system; that is, as far as the constitutional and moral habits of the people would admit. But the prince's principal merit consisted in his minute attention to office details and general administration, for he evinced neither elevated military genius nor pre-eminent stratagetical dispositions. He was highly respectable as a disciplinarian and drill tactician; but all those who were conversant with his attainments denied him the qualities essential to a great commander, or any innate disposition for the science of war on a grand scale. The unfortunate expedition to Brussels of 1830 realized these previsions in a manner most injurious to his reputation as a soldier, and most fatal to the interests of his family.

It is, however, highly necessary to remark, that Prince Frederick was universally lauded for his morality and integrity; his aversion to ostentation and extravagance, and the possession of all those virtues which constitute an amiable and worthy man, and are sufficient for a prince destined to fill a negative or secondary position in a state. Had not the impolicy of the king, and his own fatal confidence urged him to take the command of the columns that advanced on Brussels, his

name would have been still respected by the people, and he might still have maintained that negative military reputation which he has now entirely forfeited.

A mysterious and unhappy event took place towards the end of 1829, which contributed in the highest degree to injure the Prince of Orange in public opinion. This was the daring abstraction of the princess's jewels; a robbery which, in its pernicious results, bore the strongest affinity to the notorious history of the diamond necklace and the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. This was the more distressing, as it was impossible to adopt any judicial steps to dissipate the mystery, or to relieve the prince from the odious and improbable imputations so virulently cast upon him by his enemies, and so confidently believed by the credulous public.

But away with such atrocious and improbable calumnies! Even if the apprehension and condemnation of the burglar *Polari* were not sufficient to disprove all that has been said, what reasonable man could place his hand on his heart, and say that he ever credited one particle of the foul accusation. The perpetrator of this act, a Swiss named Carrara, *alias* Polari, was traced to America, where he was apprehended, and brought back to Holland after some delay, and there tried, found guilty, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The greater part of the jewels were recovered. That His Royal Highness may have been extravagant; that he may have been injudicious in the selection of some of his private and confidential friends; that his domestic happiness may now and then have been clouded, may be true; but to suppose, for one moment, that he directly or indirectly participated in a burglarious attack on his own palace, or in the plunder of his own wife, was a monstrous supposition that every generous heart ought to have spurned with indignation. That this

robbery was adroitly executed, that the size of the foot-marks in the garden, and other coincidences, unfortunately cast strong suspicions on an innocent, but unpopular individual, known to enjoy the prince's favour, is possible; but the antecedents of the prince's life, his position, his future prospects, and his facility for procuring funds, had he stood in urgent want of pecuniary relief, were sufficient guarantees that he was an utter stranger to the whole business. Since all persons were permitted to indulge in the field of speculation, it would have been equally just to have asserted that the robbery was effected by some of the persons connected with that projected revolution which Count Hoggendorp declares to have been so long anticipated.

Be this as it may, the effect produced on the public mind was most injurious to the prince's interests, and seems to have been predestined as an addition to that mass of fatalities which subsequently placed an insurmountable barrier between the Nassau dynasty and the Belgian nation. At the first breaking out of the revolution; at the moment when the prince so gallantly, so nobly threw himself on the generosity of the Brussels population; during the time that the expulsion of the Nassau family was under discussion in congress, and at a later period, when overtures were made to the provisional government, and movements were attempted in the prince's favour, this vile accusation was reproduced, and employed as a counter-stimulus to excite the people. Indeed, it was not only bandied about from tongue to tongue, but even traced in large characters and gross terms upon the very walls of the prince's own palace.

Such was the general opinion relative to the reigning dynasty. The high moral character of the royal family could not fail to produce the most beneficent effect in a country where the population is devout, where domestic

virtues are not only appreciated, but practised more generally, perhaps, than in any other state in Europe, and where the anti-religious theories of Voltarian philosophy had committed but trifling ravages amongst the middling classes. It was this reputation for benevolence and morality that served to bridle the multitude, to attach them to the court, and thus to render the efforts of the leading revolutionists infinitely more difficult; for, the example of the royal family, if not immediately before the public eye, was brought almost immediately home to their senses. The benefits derived from them by the tradespeople, working classes, and poor were direct; whilst, on the other hand, the evils wrought by the political conduct of the king were, in some measure, reflective, and were moreover attributed to the agency of an obnoxious minister, who, though greatly praised in Holland for his intellectual powers and private worth, may be said to have resumed the whole grievances of the nation, the whole revolution, in his own person; a minister, to whom, in a great measure, may be attributed the dissolution of the kingdom, and the destruction of the dynasty; who, had he been alive to the signs of the times, and gifted with that foresight, that perspicuity, and patriotism ascribed to him by his panegyrists, would have resigned office, and thus compelled his too prejudiced master to adopt a measure called for by the unanimous voice of the people; a measure that, according to universal opinion, would, in all human probability, have anticipated all the mischief that ensued.

Having thus attempted to trace the characters of the royal family, it may not be uninteresting to offer a cursory sketch of the social position of the higher classes at Brussels prior to the revolution. In order to prevent jealousies and to equalize the profits arising from

the expenditure of the civil list, as well as to balance the inconvenience and expense accruing to members by the removal of the legislative sessions, these, according to the 98th article of the fundamental law, were held alternately at Brussels and the Hague. The royal family, consequently removed from one city to the other about the commencement of October of each year, in order that the sovereign might be ready for the opening of the Chambers, which ceremony always took place on the third Monday of that month. Either from motives of economy or convenience, the diplomatic corps rarely followed the Court into Holland; that is, with the exception of the Danish minister and British ambassador, which latter received on this account a considerable augmentation to his already overgrown appointments—thus enjoying a salary nearly three times higher than was necessary for his maintenance on the most liberal footing. An unnecessary and useless waste of the public money, heedlessly granted to lord Clancarty at the period that the marriage of the prince of Orange to the princess Charlotte was under negociation, and when that diplomatist was supposed to be accredited to a family embassy, but which ought to have been diminished at a subsequent period; for there was not a single plausible motive for Great Britain maintaining an ambassador of the first class at the enomous salary of £14,000 sterling per annum, when France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and every other power in Europe was enabled to transact business with ministers plenipotentiary of the first, second, and third class, upon salaries averaging the third of the amount paid to the representative of Great Britain.*

* The salary was subsequently reduced to 12,000*l.*, still double what it ought to have been.

In addition to that numerous body of political refugees to whom allusion has been made in a former chapter, foreigners of all nations flocked to Brussels, attracted by the beauty and centrality of its position, by its vicinity to Great Britain, by the abundance of its markets, the cheapness of the necessaries and luxuries of life, the salubrity of its climate, and the advantages it offered for education. The whole of the upper portions bordering on the park and adjacent ramparts were inhabited almost exclusively by respectable and affluent persons, mostly English, who formed a colony amounting altogether to nearly 5,000 persons of all classes, whose average expenditure being taken at about 10 francs per day, formed an annual disbursement of upwards of £770,000. The greater part of this sum being expended in purchasing the necessaries of life or objects of primary want, it naturally contributed to the enrichment of small traders, workmen, and the surrounding market people. This, of course, formed a prominent item in the budget of municipal ways and means, by adding about one-fifteenth to the gross consumption of the city. Indeed the diffusion of this sum, which is far from being overrated, was a source of more than common profit and advantage to a numerous class of retail dealers, who compelled the strangers to pay at least ten per cent. more for all marketable objects than they could obtain from the natives.

Although every encouragement was given by the Court to foreigners, and every thing was done to contribute to their amusement and comfort, as far at least as was consistent with etiquette and the retired habits of all the royal family, except the Prince of Orange; still there never existed any cordiality or semblance of amalgamation between strangers and natives. The

male portion; especially the younger branches of the Belgian youth, were rejoiced at being invited to English houses, where the frank hospitality of the hosts and the fascinations of the female members of the family, offered puissant attractions, always accepted, though perhaps not always duly appreciated. But the law of reciprocity, and indeed of gratitude, was not often adhered to; for no sooner did one of these persons marry and establish himself, than all recollection of past kindness, and indeed of persons, apparently merged. So far was this carried in some instances, that in the event of English women being united to natives, the former were immediately weaned from the society of their own country-people, and if they did perchance accept civilities at their hands, it was only with the trembling dread of the talion law. The same observation might be applied to almost all the Belgian families, who, with the exception of the members of the diplomatic corps, and here and there some distinguished casual visitor, rarely admitted foreigners into their society. It is true there were clubs where a sort of approachment took place, but this entailed neither expense or trouble, beyond the common courtesies of salutation. Thus, though the males partook freely of English hospitality, the females rarely or ever met, save at public reunions, where both purchased their privileges of admission; and even there the line was as distantly marked as that which distinguishes the waters of the Rhine and Moselle on their first encountering each other between the same banks.

The most wealthy and influential houses, whether noble, commercial, or financial—such, for example, as the Dukes of Aremberg and Ursel, the Princes de Ligne, Chimay, and Gavre, the Marquises of Trazegnies, Assche, and Lallaing, the Counts Mérode, d'Aerschot,

Villain XIV, d'Outrelmont, and Mercy d'Argenteau, the Barons Secus and Stassart, the Englers, Meeus, Coghens, and Mertens—all of them possessing princely incomes, noble mansions, and all the requisites for reception—rarely or ever opened their doors to the English residents. It was not, therefore, without some degree of justice that they were accused of a want of that hospitality and sociability which respectable foreigners so generally encounter in other continental states, especially those beyond the Rhine.*

The natives defended themselves from this accusation of inhospitality, at least as far as related to the English, by citing the overwhelming numbers of the colonists, the impossibility of receiving all, and the difficulty of drawing a line, where the whole were supposed to be equally respectable. They said, "we cannot be introduced to one family without entailing upon ourselves the acquaintance of the mass, and thus falling into the incomprehensible English system of filling our houses to suffocation. Besides, the English, essentially and exclusively English, wherever they chance to wander, invariably carry with them their customs, prejudices, hours, and peculiarities; which, however well adapted to the climate and usages of Great Britain, are at variance with those of continental nations, and render any approach to intimacy nearly impossible." Although there was certainly some justice in these observations, still there was much exaggeration, and the excuse hardly holds good, since the cordiality of the natives was not more expansive to strangers of other nations.

But this want of cordiality was not confined to foreigners, but was even observed in the relations of natives among themselves. Their society was divided

* There were, however, some notable exceptions; amongst others, the noble families of D'Hoogvorst, Duval, and Bethune.

into various coteries and factions, which, if not immediately hostile to, were evidently jealous of, each other. Thus the more ancient aristocracy suffered, rather than amalgamated, with those of an inferior grade. The latter held themselves aloof from the high commerce, finance, and public functionaries. These associated little with the bar and learned professions, who also kept themselves distinct from the general class of respectable citizens. The military, with the exception of some young men of family, or a few officers of rank, were rarely seen in society of any kind.

Although almost all the noble families possessed considerable wealth, and had all the means and appurtenances necessary for the ample enjoyment of social life, they lived with little display or splendour, and appeared to be more intent on economising and increasing their fortunes, than in expending it in generous interchanges of hospitality. It is true that ever and anon their doors were thrown open, banquets were given, a refulgence of light was seen streaming through their windows, and sounds of merriment were heard to echo from their halls. But these were chiefly ceremonious efforts, sacrifices to pride, forced contributions to civility, got up as painful obligations rather than as spontaneous festivals, destined to promote conviviality and recreation

The want of cordiality existing between certain classes of society, became more marked in proportion as the doctrines of the "union" gained ground. So that during the carnival and spring immediately preceding the revolution, an absolute schism may be said to have arisen between the Catholic aristocracy and that part that was less exaggerated in its religious or political tenets.

The line of demarcation that separated these parties

has not been drawn closer even at the present hour; for with the exception of the Duke d'Aremberg, the greater portion of whose vast estates lay in Germany, and who was always ostensibly neutral in politics, the great aristocratical houses—such, for instance, as those of De Ligne, Chimay, Gavres, Ursel, Trazegnies, Mercy d'Argentau, Assche, D'Outrelmont, and others of equal high blood and fortune—have kept themselves entirely aloof from the Mérodes, D'Aerschots, Villain XIV., D'Hoogvorsts, Chastelers, Duvals de Beaulieu, and Stassarts, who form the nucleus of the present court party.

The schism that existed and still exists between the two branches of the aristocracy, is pregnant however with considerable embarrassment to King Leopold. That estrangement which before the revolution was but a mere coolness, has now ripened into absolute antipathy; not, perhaps, entirely devoid of jealousy on the part of those, who, though spontaneously avoiding the Court, in some measure consider all courtly places and distinctions as their natural dowry; whilst those who are in actual possession, cannot look forward without anxiety to the time when the present dissentients shall come forward, and demand their share of the good things that are now their own exclusive property. Each succeeding day serves to widen this breach, and to diminish the prospect of future amalgamation At the present hour the two parties can scarcely be induced to meet under the same roof, and as both are equally tenacious, and disinclined to surrender their respective pretensions, it is probable that the one must ultimately remain excluded, or the other abandon its position. Union between two such conflicting elements is almost hopeless. But it is time to return to the political situation of the country, immediately preceding the French revolution.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EFFICACY OF CONCESSION—OPINIONS OF THE JOURNALS—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE AT THE HAGUE—APPOINTMENT OF VAN MAANEN TO THE PRESIDENCY—FRESH PROSECUTIONS OF THE PRESS—INTELLIGENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION REACHES BRUSSELS—ITS EFFECTS ON THE PUBLIC MIND—SUPINENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT—UNPOPULARITY OF M. LIBRY BAGNANO—EXCITED STATE OF THE CAPITAL, AND SYMPTOMS OF AN APPROACHING CHANGE.

THE concessions made by the government in the months of May and June, 1830, and the removal of some of the grievances most loudly complained of, did more to reduce the petitionary fever, and to calm the virulence of the press, than all the repressive measures hitherto adopted. Not that the repressive system was any way mitigated; for scarcely a day passed without the arrest or interrogation of some popular writer, or without some new prosecution being announced.

Some idea of the state of public opinion in the month of June, may be derived from the following article, extracted from the *Courrier des Pays Bas.*—After dwelling on the extreme hardship of sacrificing the interests of the southern provinces to those of the north, the writer proceeds thus:—"It is not at a moment when the government has commenced to repair the injustice complained of by the Belgians, that we shall stand forward as partisans of an exaggerated or outrageous opposition, or attempt to stir up the fire of hatred and discord. Our attacks against the government have been constant, energetic, and, if you will, impassioned.

But with whom rested the fault? A revolting partiality oppressed Belgium;—ought we to have approved of it, or to have remained silent? Freedom of speech and instruction was torn from us;—ought we to have applauded this spoliation? Public institutions and employments had become the exclusive patrimony of the north. Men, as egotistical as they were imprudent, ventured to maintain that Belgium having been united to Holland, the former were, in some sort, a mere conquered people, who might be cut up and dealed with as best suited the will of the latter;—ought we to have pleaded guilty, and tranquilly bent our heads to the stroke? When, in the midst of an animated polemic, the most unheard-of rigours were put in force against ourselves and our friends, ought we, like enervated slaves, to have basely cringed to our persecutors? Could we degraded Belgians submit to the domination of another country, and permit our names to be again effaced from the list of nations?—Certainly, our patience could not be expected to extend so far.

"Though the crisis had been fermenting for ten years, it did not manifest itself in 1828. The causes that led to it are known to the whole world. It would be superfluous to reproduce them. All that the Belgians demanded, to enable them to live in peace, was that they should not be oppressed. An equal distribution of rights would have anticipated all those internal schisms which distracted the country, and would have prevented all irritation in the public mind.

"But ought we to complain of what has taken place? Is it a misfortune for the country that the mass of the nation should have deviated a moment from the calm into which it will hasten to return so soon as it can do so without shame or feebleness? The Belgians were always firmly attached to their privileges and national

individualities; and those who are in any way acquainted with our history are well aware that no one ever infringed those privileges with impunity.—What has taken place is a further historical lesson that will, we hope, be profitable both to rulers and people."

The article terminates by admitting the revival of internal calm—a convincing proof of the good effects that might have been produced by further concession. Indeed, had the ministry sedulously occupied itself after the session of 1829, in framing a project of law for the repeal of the remaining grievances; and, upon the first intelligence of the Parisian revolution, had the court hastened to Brussels, and there called an extraordinary meeting of the States-General, and boldly come forward with this conciliatory bill, taking, at the same time, proper precautions, military and civil, to maintain the public peace, there is every reason for affirming that the catastrophe might have been averted. But, unfortunately, the interests of Holland—so incompatible with those of Belgium—acted like a clog to all the good dispositions of the crown. It would have been almost impossible to have given way to the views of the south without flying directly in the face of those of the north, and thus transplanting the focus of discontent from Brussels and Liege to Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

In the excess of prejudice and national irritation, this radical difficulty in the king's position has not been sufficiently taken into account. Many errors laid to his charge have been declared to emanate solely from partiality or malice prepense, when, in fact, they were inevitable—being the natural consequences of the insuperable incompatibility of the two people. The allies ordained the union of the two countries, without sufficiently considering this point, for they gave Belgium—a rich and blooming bride, but of a jealous and impatient

temper—into the arms of Holland, a cold, phlegmatic, self-interested bridegroom, who was determined not only to debar its partner from the co-enjoyment of the marriage rights, and from a community of goods, but to behave to her as a tyrannical master towards a young captive. The king was, doubtless, desirous to act up to the views of the allies, and to maintain the union in all its vigour; but, in undertaking the task, he must have shut his eyes to the history, and forgotten the opposite character, of the two people. Had he not done so, he must have felt convinced not only that "fusion" was impracticable, but that co-existence, under the same laws, was almost impossible.

Both the allies and the king—for the king was, of course, the principal founder of the administrative basis on which he intended to rule the kingdom—committed the same fault that is remarked of Philip II. by the president Nenny, who, in speaking of that monarch, says, "An inexcusable error that characterized the whole state policy of Philip, was, that he never could be induced to adapt his form of government to the genius or habits of the different nations composing his empire, nor to vary his system according to the ancient laws of each, as justice and prudence required. According to his principle, all his subjects, whether American, Spanish, Italian, Sicilian, or Belgian, ought to be governed by the same forms." This system of uniformity, which Montaine says "is one of those impracticable theories that sometimes mislead great minds, and invariably preoccupy limited intellects," was looked on as a sheet-anchor by the allies, and was, unfortunately, adopted by the king. Here, in fact, was the shoal on which the vessel instantly grounded. Uniform constitution, legislation, and representation was to be the sovereign remedy for every evil;—a remedy that was destined to counterbalance the extremest dissonance of habits, traditions, language, and religion, that ever

existed between two neighbouring people;—a remedy that was to soften down the rancour of centuries, and to induce two nations, first to forget all those individualities that rendered them antipodal to each other, and then to unite for the maintenance of that barrier throne in whose preservation one party had no leading interest.

The contrast between the sagacious and politic conduct of the king of Prussia, towards the Rhenan provinces, and that of the Dutch government with regard to Belgium, merits observation, more especially as those provinces were ceded to the former as a *bonâ fide* augmentation of territory, obtained by conquest, and to be incorporated with old Prussia, or dealt with at the discretion of the king. It was natural to suppose, that an absolute monarch would have forthwith imposed his own laws on his trans-Rhenan acquisitions, and thus have compelled the minority, which was in the proportion of *one* to *ten*, to adopt the system of the majority, But the king was too wise to introduce any abrupt change amongst a people who, during nearly twenty years, had been ruled by a code to which they were attached, more perhaps from custom than inclination.

The jury, French penal code, and judicial organization were consequently maintained, and only such alterations introduced in the local administration as were rendered necessary by the adoption of the Prussian financial and military system. With few exceptions also, the whole of the public functionaries of the left bank were selected from the natives of those provinces; so that the pride, interests, and prejudices of the Rhinelanders were flattered, and that attachment to France, which at one time certainly did exist, was gradually converted into a sincere regard for the equity and paternal intentions of the Prussian monarch. Thus the popular movement which menaced the tranquillity of Aix-la-Chapelle in the

autumn of 1830, was instantly suppressed by the spontaneous loyalty of the citizens themselves.

The position of the kings of Prussia and the Netherlands, with regard to their territorial acquisitions, was in some measure similar. The Rhenan provinces and Belgium demanded the maintenance of the jury and French code; whilst Prussia and Holland would not hear of one or the other, but were satisfied with the old Roman and German laws. The Rhenan provinces wished for a constitution, whilst the old Prussians, contented with their provincial states (*Land Stände*) and the administrative system by which they had been ruled since the time of the Electors of Brandenbourg, had little desire for a constitution or national representation. In short, the interests and views of the Prussian subjects on the right and left banks of the Rhine, were almost as distinct as those of the Netherlanders on the opposite sides of the Moerdyck.

Much clamour has been raised against the King of Prussia, for not granting to his people a general constitution. But those who have well studied the disposition of that people, and have watched the march of events in the Netherlands, are of opinion that the monarch acted most prudently in postponing this measure; until a general desire for more liberal institutions should have diffused itself through the old provinces, and until those of the left Rhine bank should have lost all remembrance of the link that once connected them with France; in short, until the whole Prussian nation should be so completely identified in moral and material interests, as to admit of their being governed by an uniform constitution, and uniform judicial system.*

* It may be observed that the desire formerly expressed for a constitution has diminished rather than increased, especially in old Prussia.

To panegyrize the King of Prussia for withholding from his subjects a constitution, may be highly unpopular, especially in an age when there exists so general a mania for forcing nations to adopt liberal constitutions; without considering whether they are ripe for such institutions; or if ripe, whether the majority of the people are desirous of such a boon. But, without questioning the policy or impolicy of such efforts, it may be permitted to state that, in this instance, the King of Prussin acted wisely. Had he granted the constitution demanded by a portion of his subjects in 1815, and had a national representation been established, there is every reason to believe that it would have eventually given rise to extreme discontent in the Rhenan provinces. Unity of representation must have entailed unity of legislation and administration. The welfare of the Rhinelanders would have been left entirely at the mercy of the deputies of the north. The interests of the minority would have been at the disposal of a jealous majority; the jury and French code would infallibly have been abolished; and ere long, a complete schism would have sprung up from the very means adopted to produce fusion. It was, therefore, surely more politic to deny a bond of *apparent* union concealing the germs of *real* discord, and thus to preserve the integrity of the whole, than to have granted that which would have acted as a dissolvent, and produced results similar to those that caused the rupture in Belgium.

Many of the ablest political economists both in Belgium and Holland are now of opinion that the imposition of a uniform constitution was the real alkali that produced all subsequent fermentation, and that co-existence under one and the same laws was impracticable. On the other hand, there are others who question the possibility of governing the two kingdoms under a distinct administrative system, with no other connecting link than

that of the dynasty. "Nature," says Mr. Nothomb, in his essay "sometimes astounds us by creating double beings, living by the same vivifying impulse, though inhabiting distinct bodies; but neither art or politics have as yet been able to imitate this phenomena." If, then, an existence like to that of the Siamese youth was a political monstrosity, and the union of the two bodies with only one head equally unnatural, it is evident that the junction of the two kingdoms as ordained by the allies was, what M. Libry Bagnano entitles, "a mere political romance."*

But to continue: scarcely had the popular irritation and petitionary fever somewhat subsided, or the journals commenced to assume a milder tone, ere the definitive establishment of the supreme court of justice *(haute cour)* at the Hague at once destroyed all the good effects of the recent concessions.†

The best friends of the government looked with anxiety at a measure whose unpopularity was aggra-

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* "La Ville Rebelle, ou les Belges au Tribunal de l'Europe," p. 260.

† The following comparative return of appeal trials, during a space of ten years, will afford a convincing proof of the injustice and partiality of a measure that forced the southern litigants to remove their causes to the Hague:—

List of civil and commercial appeal cases brought before the high court from 1820 to 1830—

Brussels	6,352
Liege	3,082
	9,434
Hague	1,940
Difference	7,494

The proportion, therefore, was nearly five to one in favour of Belgium; and, indeed, on a nearer examination of the same returns, it appears that the single province of South Brabant produced 1,608 civil cases, whilst those of all Holland amounted only to 1,633.

vated by the projected appointment of the obnoxious minister, Van Maanen, to the presidency. It was considered the more impolitic to irritate the masses at a moment when there existed a strong fermentation in France, and when the agents of the Propaganda were actively and artfully seeking to disseminate their doctrines in Germany, Poland, Italy, and especially in Belgium. The burst of indignation, which universally assailed the government, was further increased by the multiplied prosecutions of the press, and the alleged vexatory system adopted in regard to De Potter and his colleagues. These apostles of republicanism, who had been most unnecessarily detained for Prussian and Hessian passports at Vaals, a small frontier village near Aix-la-Chapelle, were spoken of by the papers with a sort of religious veneration. Their names were constantly brought before the public with every mark of respect and admiration. Each succeeding day's detention served but to augment their ill-merited popularity, and to detract from the loyalty of the people towards the government.

It is no easy matter to decide whether destiny or impolicy had the greatest share in thus luring on the government to its own destruction, for the testimony is as conflicting as the conduct of the cabinet was incomprehensible. It is impossible, however, that those murmuring thunders, which announced an approaching tempest in France, could have passed unheeded by the Netherlands ministry; or that, in the then excited state of men's minds, they could hope that Belgium would escape the contagious reaction of any popular movement in the former country. To plead ignorance of the state of public feeling, either at home or abroad, would be an admission that would brand the ministry and their diplomatic agents with an indelible stigma. It is true,

perhaps, that neither they nor any human being could have imagined that Prince Polignac would venture to advise that fatal measure which hurled his aged sovereign from the throne; or—and here was the most remarkable phenomenon—that Great Britain would abjure her system of subsidiary or armed intervention, and wisely leave continental nations to settle their internal affairs as best suited their own interests.

If the Netherlands government deemed it inexpedient to make further concessions, lest this giving way at the eleventh hour should be looked on as an additional proof of that weakness with which it had been taunted, surely it was most imprudent to adopt aggravating measures, that were essentially calculated to add fuel to the flame of sedition. At all events, if such a system was determined on, it was the maximum of folly not to take vigorous steps to guard against the consequences. But, as it has been already observed, the energy of the cabinet was never demonstrated in proper season: it was invariably tardy or premature. The prosecutions against the press, of which upwards of thirty were on the roll of the attorney-general in July, cannot be taken into account; for the general crusadé against the journals, attended by vexatious measures of domestic search, interrogation, seizure of papers, and promiscuous arrest of publishers, authors, compositors, and printers, did but augment the general animosity to M. Van Maanen, without diminishing the virulence of the evil.

The minister seemed to forget that unless actions against the press are imperatively called for by law, and unless these laws are devoid of all arbitrary tendency, and are founded on general necessity and unquestionable equity, they only serve as firebrands, which every prudent government ought to avoid casting amongst the people, especially at a moment of popular

excitement, such as universally prevailed during the month of August.

This memorable epoch, pregnant with the fate of two dynasties, found the Belgian capital busily absorbed in celebrating the first triennial exhibition of national industry. This interesting solemnity, accompanied by a series of fêtes, concerts, horse-races, and a variety of other public amusements calculated to divert the immense concourse of strangers attracted to the metropolis, was intended to close with a brilliant illumination and pyrotechnical display on the 24th of August, on which day the king entered his fifty-ninth year. Never did Brussels present a gayer or more animated aspect—so much private amusement was never blended with so much public utility. The hotels were crowded to such exeess that even the King of Wurtemberg found it difficult to procure a lodging as he passed on his way homewards. The theatres, public walks, gardens, and drives were thronged with spectators, equipages, and pedestrians, from France, England, and the Rhenan provinces. All was apparent happiness and content: it was impossible for a stranger to discover the slightest symptom of that awful storm that was destined ere long to convert this scene of rejoicing and harmonious rivalry into a theatre of bloody contention and civil strife. Still less could one suppose that the monarch whose fostering hand had contributed so largely to this display of prosperity and wealth, and whose natal day it was proposed to celebrate with so much pomp, should ere long be driven from his dominions, and that a name venerated during centuries as the type of liberty and enlightened wisdom, should suddenly be converted into a symbol of tyranny and oppression.

It was in the midst of these rejoicings that intelligence of the Polignac ordonnances, and the sanguinary

struggle at Paris reached Brussels. The effect produced on the public mind was electrical. The account of the successful efforts of the Parisian people was read with enthusiastic avidity in the journals, which were obliged to multiply their editions by thousands. These accounts being reprinted in the form of pamphlets in the Flemish language, were diffused through the country, causing universal excitement, and finding sympathy in every heart. With the exception of the official journals, which were silent, and one or two others that deprecated the revolution, the remaining papers extolled the conduct of the French people in terms that awakened expectations of vengeance in the hearts of some; whilst it excited hopes in others, less hostilely disposed, that the government would take warning, and frankly enter into that conciliatory system which could alone avert a similar catastrophe from the Netherlands.

But nothing was done. The government seemed plunged in a most profound lethargy, and was apparently indifferent to the moral effect produced by the events of the "*three days.*" Overweeningly confident in its strength and the efficacy of its repressive system, the ministry continued its crusade against the press, and multiplied those vexations, every one of which, to employ a trite simile, was an additional nail driven into their own bier. Nay, so extreme was this blind confidence, that when one of the ministers was urged by a judicious friend to place the editorship of the *National* in other hands, since that journal evidently injured the cause it was intended to defend, he is said to have replied,—"What matters it? our acts are sufficient to defend themselves."

Yet never did any government adopt more ill-advised measures to counterbalance the influence of the press. That mighty power, which, more formidable than the lever of Archimedes, may be said to move the whole

world; a power that holds Great Britain, France, Belgium, and America at its disposal—that is not without immense influence in Germany—that, setting at defiance police, prisons, fines, and bayonets, is the terror of tyrants, and the noblest bulwark of human liberty; a power that some men affect to despise, but no man dares offend with impunity; a power, that can raise the most abject to eminence, and drag down the most exalted to a level with the most debased!

"A fact, now evident to every human being, but which no government seems to admit," says a French publicist, long in the pay of the Dutch government, "is, that there is infinitely more force and vigour in journalism than in any other system of political economy. If, then, it be true that the press be too powerful—that is, in comparison with the strength of governments—the latter have only to choose between two alternatives; namely, either to endeavour to weaken the press by restoring to public force that repressive action, without which it can have no restrictive power; or by leaning for support on journalism, thus to render it an auxiliary of the government!

"But, is it possible now-a-days to enfeeble the press? Has this power not become an inevitable necessity in every state? Is it not considered as the first, the most solid, guarantee of popular liberties? Who is there, in fact, who can avoid being struck by the forcible expression of M. de Châteaubriand, who certainly cannot be accused of jacobinism, and who exclaims, 'I would rather have the liberty of the press without the charter, than the charter without the liberty of the press!'

"If any attempt to weaken, silence, or enchain the press be a work of infinite difficulty in actual times, is it not possible to form an alliance with this redoubtable foe? If it cannot be conquered by force, is it not possible to neutralize it by fraternization? This is a mea-

sure to which governments have hitherto devoted little attention."*

It was by neglecting these truths, or rather from pursuing an erroneous system, as regarded both the hostile and friendly press, that the Netherlands government paved the way to that overwhelming catastrophe, which a more prudent course might have averted. Up to the last moment, it held itself superior to that power which is eventually destined to vanquish all opposition, and to place itself on a par with thrones.

"Under the safeguard of institutions that guaranteed the security of our persons and property, and the maintenance of our liberty," said the official Netherlands journal of the 1st of August, "we may contemplate, without alarm, but not without sorrow, the miseries that afflict other people." Yet, at the moment these lines were being printed, the mine of sedition was charged with inflammatory matter to the very match, and the breast of every well-wisher to the throne was filled with intense anxiety, lest some burning ember should be borne into the country, and cause that conflagration for which the materials had been so long prepared.

As to the pre-existence of this combustible matter, not only Count Hoggendorp, but many other well-informed persons, are agreed, and amongst these a publicist who, certes, cannot be accused of hostility to Holland.

The *Ville Rebelle*, a work attributed to M. Libry Bagnano, and written in a style of the most bitter, but perhaps not unnatural vindictiveness towards Belgium, contains the following passage:†—

* "Dix Jours de Campagne, ou la Hollande en 1831, par Ch. Durand." Amsterdam, 1832.

† "La Ville Rebelle, ou les Belges au Tribunal de l'Europe." La Haye, 1831.

"The Baron Verstoelk Van Soelen stated in the sitting of the States-General of the 20th January, 1831, 'that a hostile spirit towards government had only commenced manifesting itself about two years and a half previous.' Now it is evident that his excellency chose his point of departure from the union of the priests and jacobins, and that he has condescended to forgive all the subversive intrigues constantly, but separately, employed by each party, especially the former, long previous to that epoch. The fact is, the king's government met with opposition to its measures, and resistance to its acts, from the first foundation of the kingdom. This opposition manifested itself, in the first instance, amongst the clergy and aristocracy; for the liberals would willingly have coalesced with the government, from their aversion to the priests, if the administration had taken greater care to watch over and direct the various wheels of state machinery. But, by a deplorable fatality, that which was effected by one minister *was instantly undone by his colleague or successor.* The machinery of government *only moved by starts: sometimes advancing, sometimes retrograding;* so that the factious party invariably obtained possession of the ground that was lost by the *oscillatory and vacillating march of the cabinet.*"

The justice of this severe criticism is borne out by the proceedings of the administration at the period of the July revolution. Although no overt demonstration took place in the capital or provinces for many days subsequent to this event, still there existed a vague and gloomy ebullition, a craving after movement and change, a sinister murmuring and heaving of the public mind, and an indefinable irritation that foreboded approaching convulsion. The acts of government were canvassed with undisguized acrimony both by old and young; the

words country, liberty, and oppression were repeated by the very children in the streets. De Potter and his companions were held up as demi-gods, and Van Maanen and his colleagues as odious tyrants. The press, both provincial and metropolitan, redoubled its vigilance; and the *Courrier des Pays Bas*, the great organ of the revolution, redoubled its efforts, and launched forth a series of daring articles, that even astounded the most liberal readers.

Hitherto, however, nothing had been published which could be considered hostile to the king or his dynasty, save here and there some vague inuendoes of domestic dissensions between the Prince and Princess of Orange, and a report of the departure of the latter for St. Petersburg. The whole weight of popular animosity was levelled against the ministry, or was rather concentrated against the master-key, M. Van Maanen. His dismissal was not only loudly called for, but openly declared to be the only means of pacifying the nation. His name was in every mouth, and ignominiously scored on every wall. So great was the popular prejudice against him, that even Alba, in the days of his fiercest terror, was not a greater object of hatred. But the monarch turned a deaf ear to these reclamations, and with fatal generosity clung to a public servant, of whose talents and devotion he was assured, but to whose councils, it may safely be affirmed, he in a great measure was indebted for the dismemberment of his kingdom.

The person next in aversion to M. Van Maanen was his reputed organ, the editor of the *National*, between whom and the liberal press there existed a mortal feud. His sarcastic and venomous pen energetically defended the government, and attacked the liberal writers with a degree of acumen, that the latter were not always enabled to parry by mere dialectic; so that in the end the

polemic between the parties degenerated into a series of the most bitter personalities. Felon! forger! branded convict! were the epithets which daily assailed the ministerial writer, who retorted on his adversaries with rebels! liars! beggars! anarchists! and ungrateful traitors! But if the opposition writers had not always the advantage, either in argument or invective, they obtained an immense superiority by the influence and credit they gained with the public. Thus, at last, the name of M. Libry Bagnano became the emblem of all that was vile and degraded, and every accusation brought against him, no matter how terrible or false, was admitted without a moment's hesitation.

The object of these attacks was not, however, so much directed against the individual as against his journal. Though far from possessing the influence it might have had, if conducted by other hands, still it had considerable weight both at home and abroad. It was important, therefore, to weaken and counterbalance its effects, and perhaps no more certain method could be found than by attacking the antecedents of M. Libry Bagnano, and by exposing an unfortunate and damning portion of his previous life. Consequently, an article appeared in the *Courrier des Pays Bas* of the 14th August, affirming that he had been found guilty of forgery at the assizes of the Rhône, and condemned in 1816 to ten years' hard labour and the mark. The judicial record of the sentence was quoted, and no one stopped to question the causes or motives of condemnation. All humanity, all consideration for the man, merged in the hatred felt for the editor. Such being the public impression, it is not possible to adduce a stronger proof of the impolicy of the government, than its persisting to employ, as the principal advocate of its cause, an individual against whom there existed such terrible prepossessions.

Whilst the flame of sedition was rapidly diffusing itself through the provinces, the social condition of Brussels underwent a considerable change. The celebrated Abbé Seyes, with Barére, Merlin (of Douay), Thebeaudeau, and about twenty other conventionalists, who had found an asylum in the Netherlands since the Bourbon restoration, had returned to France. But the places of these gray-headed patriarchs of democracy was supplied by a host of young and ardent emissaries of the Propaganda—actors in the scenes of July; who, assuming to themselves all the honour of the recent popular triumph, looked upon themselves as greater heroes than the veterans of Austerlitz or the Pyramids. Inflamed by the July struggle—disappointed, perhaps, at its tranquil issue, they eagerly sought to excite universal war. Assiduously labouring to propagate the doctrines of the movement party, these firebrands not only poured into Belgium, but endeavoured to penetrate into the Rhenish provinces, which they looked on as the patrimony and natural boundary of France.

They were seen affectedly displaying the tri-coloured cockade in the streets and public places; they talked loudly at the theatres and coffee-rooms of regenerated liberty and the rights of man; they dwelt with enthusiasm on the glories of the republic and the empire, and of the noble destinies of "young France." They sung the Marseilles' and Parisian hymns in chorus with the impassioned groups, which joined them at that moment rather in meretricious devotion to the tri-coloured banner of France than with any patriotic or latent admiration for the triple standard of Brabant. They fraternized with the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese refugees, who, with a natural longing for home, ardently hoped that the reflection of the French revolution would be carried into the uttermost corners of Europe. The

maxim of "help thyself, and heaven will support thee," and every other allusion to liberty, was hailed with enthusiasm. In short, it was evident that many days could not elapse ere the swelling torrent would overflow its dykes, unless the government skilfully threw open the flood-gates of concession, or strengthened the embankments, by employing measures of redoubled energy.

At the moment of the July revolution, De Potter and his brother exiles, who were on the road from Mayence to Switzerland, changed their route, and entering France by Strasbourg, proceeded direct to Paris. Their arrival in the French capital was a species of ovation. They were received with exaggerated demonstrations of sympathy and fraternization, the natural offspring of the excited state of public feeling at that moment. They were complimented with banquets, speeches, and toasts, and greeted with a degree of deference not always accorded to men of the most eminent merit in less feverish times.

This histrionic display of amity on the part of La Fayette and others, though the mere result of the tinsel policy of the hour, was mistaken for sterling coin by the Belgian exiles. As unaccustomed, as they were perhaps undeserving, of the extraordinary respect shown them both at home and abroad, their vanity was inflated beyond all measure, and they consequently attributed to their own particular virtues that incense which was but the mere ephemeral exhalation of the times. They little dreamed that the triumphant epoch, for which they so ardently sighed, would be the signal for their political discomfiture, and that the tide of popularity, after bearing them up on its stormy billows for a few short-lived hours, would as suddenly ebb, and leave them stranded and forgotten. In the meanwhile they leagued themselves with the most exaggerated spirits in France,

and openly avowed their republican principles, through the medium of the *Tribune*, a French paper devoted to the movement party. They also availed themselves of their temporary popularity at home to increase the exasperation of their countrymen. In short, had it depended on their will, Belgium would have risen in mass, and France would have thrown an army of occupation into that country; a war of conquest, under the pretext of giving liberal institutions, would have been declared; and those rich and fertile lands, where agriculture, industry, commerce, and the arts are now rapidly recovering their former splendour, would have been converted into a theatre of devastation and the most abject vassalage. But what were the miseries or thraldom of their country to men who had personal hatreds to revenge, and who would probably have been richly rewarded for their labour? Fortunately, however, the good genius of Europe stood between the apostles of destruction and the people whom they would have sacrificed to their reckless ambition.

Whilst this was passing at Paris, the most influential unionists who desired to proceed constitutionally, were busy concerting plans for a vigorous parliamentary campaign. All were bent on a systematic opposition to the government, and on employing every possible stratagem to induce the Dutch members to unite with them in demanding redress of grievances, and a more liberal system of government; but considerable difference of opinion existed as to ultimate proceedings.

The whole desired reform and change; but few were actuated with direct hostility to the dynasty. Some there were, however, who inwardly sighed to cast off the Dutch yoke, and eagerly turned their eyes to France.

Considering the independence of their country as chimerical as its union with Holland, and actuated by

motives not altogether devoid of self-interest, they longed for a rejunction with that nation, under whose powerful ægis Belgium had already lived secure.

Under the plea of curiosity or business, some of them, therefore, hastened to Paris, where they held consultations with the most distinguished men in and out of office, and eagerly sounded the opinion of the government as to its external policy. Nor were arguments wanting to induce it to accept the reunion in the event of a dissolution of the Netherlands monarchy. More confident than politic, more ambitious than patriotic, and more intent on the object of that ambition than on the interests of their country, they not only mistook the line of policy best suited to France, but were as much mystified by the evasive replies of the French ministry as they were deceived as to the strength of the movement party.

Maturer consideration, and a more profound knowledge of general politics, would have shown them that the consolidation of Louis Philippe's government mainly depended on its maintaining amicable relations with other nations, and, above all, with Great Britain; that the latter never would consent to Belgium, or any portion of Belgium, again becoming an integral part of France; that French statesmen, however much they might covet the goodly fruit, were not so utterly blind to their own interests, as to balance between general peace and an alliance with England, or general war and a union with Belgium. They forgot that the immense majority, especially of manufacturing and agricultural France, was adverse to all renewed attempts at territorial aggrandizement; which, if successful, could merely serve to admit the improved industry of Belgium and the Rhine to equal competition with their own produce; and that, during fifteen years of peace, an immense social

revolution had taken place. The aristocracy of property, which is founded on conservative principles, having superseded the aristocracy of chivalry, which is based on destruction.

It is true, that the promises of the movement leaders, who over-rated their own influence at home, as much as they were deceived as to the real wishes of the majority of the Belgian people, were calculated to mislead the reunionists; but the latter ought to have had sufficient perspicuity to discover that there was no prospect of France entering into their views unless the war party obtained a complete ascendency. The experiment could only be made under the penalty of a general European conflagration; an attempt the less likely, since the majority of the French chambers supported the dynasty; since it was the interest of that dynasty to preserve peace abroad, in order to gain strength at home; and since the prudent conduct of the British cabinet and its allies had removed all pretext for drawing the sword.

The sentiments of European nations must not, however, be mistaken. On the one hand, any renewed holy alliance or invasive coalition against France, would have been as unpopular on the Continent as in Great Britain; whilst it would have knit the whole French people in one terrible phalanx, whose repulsive reaction might have brought destruction on every crowned head from the Rhine to the Neva. On the other hand, however much the people of Europe may have applauded the effort made by those of France to assert their liberties at home, had a French army approached the Meuse, though under the pretext of propagating liberal opinions, the first clang of their advancing trumpets would have rallied against them the whole trans-Rhenan population, and would have regenerated all those antipathies that twice brought the allies to the gates of Paris.

CHAPTER IX.

INCENDIARY AND SEDITIOUS PLACARDS—WANT OF ENERGY OF THE AUTHORITIES—GARRISON OF BRUSSELS—ILLUMINATIONS FOR THE KING'S BIRTH-DAY POSTPONED—RIOTS IN THE PARK ON THE 24TH—DISTURBANCES AT THE THEATRE ON THE 25TH—THE OFFICE OF THE "NATIONAL" ATTACKED—LIBRY BAGNANO'S HOUSE AND MANY OTHERS PILLAGED AND BURNED—ROYAL INSIGNIA REMOVED—PUSILLANIMITY OF THE DUTCH GENERALS—THE CITY GIVEN UP TO THE BURGHERS—FIRST FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD—THEY FIRE ON THE PEOPLE—TERROR OF THE BRITISH INHABITANTS.

In proportion as the elements of commotion gathered more densely around, every well-wisher of the government earnestly prayed that the monarch, boldly repudiating the system pursued by the ministry, would instantly step forward and sacrifice his own convictions and prejudices to the urgent necessities of the times. The dismissal of M. Van Maanen and the transfer of the *National* into other hands, were looked for with extreme anxiety. It was hoped that the Court would have removed to Brussels, where the presence of the king and princes could not fail to produce a favourable effect; that the removal of the high court to the Hague would have been repealed; and that a proposal would be brought forward in the ensuing session to amend the fundamental law, as far as regarded ministerial responsibility. At all events, it was expected that the most energetic orders would be issued to maintain public peace.

But these hopes were daily frustrated. The king and princes did, it is true, come to Brussels, but returned forthwith to the Hague; M. Van Maanen was said to

be in higher favour than ever; the obnoxious editor of the *National* continued his unpopular and virulent polemic. The irresponsibility of the ministry was even defended by the official organs; and, finally, the city was left to the care of men who had neither heart, talent, or energy to meet the eventful crisis that was so near at hand.

Even as the rustling of the forest-leaves, or the hollow swelling of the ocean portend the coming gale, so vague reports, for many days current amongst the public, foretold an approaching convulsion. "Seditious fames," those twin sisters of "seditious tumults," were rife throughout the land:

> "———— Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
> Sæpe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella."

Groups were seen collecting in the streets; the representations at the theatres became noisy and tempestuous, and the slightest allusions to the French revolution were applauded with enthusiasm. The diligences, on their arrival in the provinces, were surrounded with anxious inquiries regarding the state of the capital. The journals, in despite of accumulated prosecutions, had become more virulent in their attacks, and were read with still greater avidity. The blank walls were defaced with "*Down with Van Maanen!*" "*Death to the Dutch!*" "*Away with the National!*" In fact, to such extremities were matters carried, that placards were posted up in various parts of the city containing the following laconic and daring announcement:—"*Monday, fireworks! Tuesday, illumination! Wednesday, revolution!*" It was bruited abroad that the first renewed representation of the *Muette de Portici* was selected for an outbreaking, and so generally had this idea gone abroad, that the Dutch journals

more than once reported that disturbances had taken place at the Brussels theatre, several days before the riot actually occurred. Not only were these projected tumults openly talked of and announced by placards, but the civil governor of the province, Baron Vanderfosse, and M. Knyff, the director of the police, were confidentially and officially informed of all that was passing.

It might be supposed, therefore, that these two functionaries, in concert with the military authorities, took instant measures to suppress any disturbance, at the first signal of outrage, and that every individual, both military and civil, was night and day at his post, ready to spring forward at a moment's notice. It might be imagined, if the garrison was insufficient to control so large a population, that secret orders had been issued by General Bylandt for the arrival of reinforcements, which, with little exertion, might have reached Brussels from Ghent or Antwerp in a few hours, and that a well-digested plan was drawn up for the disposition of the garrison, according to the nature of the ground, and the particular quarters on which it was expected disturbances would break out.

It will scarcely be credited, however, that where promptitude, order, and energy were essentially necessary, nought but the utmost languor, confusion, and pusillanimity were displayed, and that not a single anticipatory or preventive measure was put in force. It is true the illuminations and fireworks intended to celebrate the king's birth-day had been postponed, on the plea of unfavourable weather; but, beyond this most impolitic postponement, almost insulting to the king, nothing was done. It is, therefore, difficult to determine whether Baron Vanderfosse, the civil governor of Brabant, M. Knyff, the director of police, Lieutenant-

General Bylandt, military governor of the province, Major-general Aberson, colonel in chief of the gensdarmerie, or Major-general G. J. Wauthier, city commandant, displayed greater unfitness for the important functions committed to their charge.

Although vigilant precautions were certainly requisite, no extraordinary reinforcements were necessary, the garrison being amply sufficient for all the purposes, if judiciously employed, and this, perhaps, without the necessity of firing a single shot. The troops under the orders of General Bylandt consisted of the 3d battalion of grenadiers, and 2d of light infantry of the guard, commanded by Lieutenant-colonels Antingh and Everts; one battalion of the 3d, and the depots of the 1st line regiment; the corps of armed firemen (*sapeurs pompiers*), a detachment of municipal guard, one squadron of light dragoons, and another of gensdarmes, with two pieces of artillery, horsed, and four or five guns, reserved for the purpose of firing salutes on days of public rejoicing; making altogether a force of about 1800 infantry, 240 horse, and six field-pieces. Of these, two-thirds were chosen troops, devoted to the crown; and at that period, also, there was not a Belgian officer or private who was not ready to do his duty.

The populace was without arms, ammunition, leaders, or preconcerted plan—in short, a mere rabble; for it is an indisputable fact, that it never entered into the heads of the most sanguine or exalted liberals, that the public authorities would tamely look on and permit a mere theatre riot to assume all the features of open revolt, and to be converted into the first act of a national revolution.

It is true that the fermentation in the public mind was intense; that seditious menaces were openly placarded, and that a few young men connected with the

press and learned professions, entertained a bitter animosity towards the government, and were resolved, if possible, to create a riot. But the placards, as well as this projected disturbance at the theatre, were the work of a very limited number of individuals, in which the leaders of the union, or the more influential and respectable Catholics and liberals, had no participation. It is also true that it was intended to break the windows of the *National*, the Palace of Justice, as well as those of one or two functionaries, as a preparatory demonstration of public animosity to M. Van Maanen and others; but it never was imagined that the government, after all the warning it had received, would fold its arms, and permit the populace to destroy, burn, plunder, and commit the most disgraceful outrages with consummate impunity.

Every individual inhabiting a large city is well aware of the extreme facility with which, in our days, disturbances or riots are got up, especially at the theatres, and this with little previous concert. London affords constant examples; yet, upon the strictest investigation, it is generally found that no money has been expended—that the leaders, if there be any, rarely exceed four or five insignificant individuals; that of general mobs, one-fourth are merely excited by that love of mischief, unfortunately innate in man, whilst the remaining three-quarters, at first attracted by curiosity, eventually co-operate from the force of bad example; especially when the authorities take no measures to repress them.

Temporization on such occasions is a dangerous and even cruel policy. However great the repugnance of a government to shed the blood of its fellow-citizens, it must employ force sooner or later. Unless it wish to deliver up a city to anarchy and destruction, there is

but one course to be followed—excess must be opposed, and licence chastised. Promptitude in such cases is indispensable: the longer the delay, the greater the opposition and bloodshed; for if the victory rest with the people, the reaction is always the more dreadful, since it opens the door to the most terrible of all scourges —popular vengeance, and the tyranny of the multitude. Had a vigorous course been adopted at Brussels, the monarchy had been saved, at all events for the moment. To prevent its dissolution at a later period, would perhaps have been impossible; but the separation would then have been the act of the legislature, effected constitutionally, without outrage or bloodshed, and not the work of the populace, tainted at first starting by such revolting acts of incendiarism and violence as awakened those European prejudices against Belgium, which it will require years to eradicate.

It has been asserted that the events of August were the result of long preconcerted arrangements between the various chiefs of the union; that the Counts Villain XIV., de Mérode, the Barons Sécus and D'Hoogvorst, with Messrs. Charles de Brouckère, Van der Weyer, and others, were concealed behind the curtain, and not only stimulated subaltern agents to compromise the public peace, but furnished the necessary funds for inebriating and exciting the rabble. Nothing can be more devoid of truth than this accusation. The mere fact of an intended tumult being talked of during many days, upon the first representation of the *Muette*, was sufficient to attract immense crowds to the theatre. No other stimulus was required to bring an overflowing audience, or to fill the adjacent square and streets with mischievous idlers.

None of the leading unionists would probably have come forward to oppose any public demonstration, directed against an administration which it was their

intention to attack, and, if possible, to overthrow in the ensuing session. But no sooner did intelligence reach them of what had passed, than they unanimously deprecated the excesses committed by the multitude, and loudly condemned those functionaries who had neither heart or talent to maintain the supremacy of the laws. Every concurrent testimony furnishes proofs, that the respectable unionists were not only free from all participation in the outrages of the revolutionary overture, but that not a single franc was expended by them in exciting the people. Indeed, many of those whose names have been signalized as instigators or abettors of these disgraceful scenes, were absent from Brussels, and even from Belgium.

It has been generally admitted, however, that it was determined not only to oppose the address on the opening of the chambers, but to prepare a popular movement during the month of October, unless the system of government should in the meantime be modified, and Van Maanen dismissed.

But the majority strongly reprobated any such culpable and unconstitutional mode of intimidation; which, though it might have the effect of alarming some few Dutch representatives, was looked on as essentially calculated to compromise the dignity and success of the general cause. It would authorize the government, they said, to cast aside all moderation, to suspend the ordinary course of justice by placing the capital in a state of siege, and to make terrible examples of those who participated in any overt breach of the laws.

Justice, right, and national will being on their side, they knew that they had only steadily to pursue their system of combination and passive resistance, in order to obtain redress, and that they required no other weapons than the accumulating petitions of the people,

backed by the eloquence of their representatives, and the puissant succour of the press. Besides, at that moment, the national opposition, though essentially and uniformly anti-ministerial, was only partially anti-dynastic. The great mass of the people, especially the tradesmen and inhabitants of Brussels, were far from being hostile to the court, from which they derived their principal means of existence; indeed, up to the 26th of August, there were not twenty persons in the capital, who dreamed of the possibility of ever affecting even an administrative separation between the two countries. Although thunderstruck at the facility of their triumph, they were still more astounded at the utter want of energy and foresight of the authorities, who had opened to them a vista of emancipation, that exceeded their most sanguine expectations, and thus transformed a vile mob riot, into a grand national movement that set at defiance the whole moral and physical power of Europe.

As the epoch of the king's anniversary approached, the universal rumours of intended disturbances assumed greater intensity, so that the authorities thought it prudent to adjourn the splendid illuminations destined to celebrate that event, and to limit the public rejoicings to the ordinary demonstrations usual on similar occasions. The candelabras, lamps, columns, and other ornamental preparations accumulated in the park were, however, left standing, and daily attracted numerous bodies of idlers, who, without proceeding to overt violence, repeatedly broke out into vociferations of contempt and hostility to the government. For this postponement of an illumination, intended to do honour to the sovereign, was considered as a tacit confession of want of confidence in the nation, and of weakness on the part of the authorities, and consequently served to augment the general exasperation.

These preparations ought, in fact, never to have been begun; or, if commenced, to have been vigorously executed, even as the representation of the *Muette de Portici* ought to have been forbidden entirely, or so frequently repeated as to lessen the excitement of novelty, and to wear out the public by mere satiety. The motives that actuated the regency in endeavouring to avoid a pretext for outrage, especially in the vicinity of the palaces, would have been highly praiseworthy on ordinary occasions; but, as uproar was inevitable, it was highly impolitic on their part, to remove the scene of action to a quarter of the town, where, from the nature of the ground, the public force would have greater difficulty in acting efficaciously against the rioters.

The morning of the 24th at length arrived, and was ushered in with the accustomed solemnities. As the afternoon advanced turbulent groups assembled in various parts of the town, or filled the taverns. Towards dusk, when the lights at the public edifices and private dwellings began to illumine the streets, crowds of pedestrians were seen moving to and fro, rending the air with patriotic songs, and vociferations of the most seditious nature. As the shades of night fell more densely on the city, these crowds augmented in force and riotous conduct, so that the shops were closed, doors barred, and anxious heads peeped from the windows apprehending that this violent fermentation could not subside without more dangerous tumults.

These expectations were not void of foundation. A large body of young men (many of whom, to judge by their attire, were of a better class), followed by a multitude of the lower orders, proceeded round the park; having reached the hotel of Prince de Gavre, grand chamberlain of the queen's household, a cry of "Down with the Dutch!" was raised, and instantly a volley of

stones smashed the illuminated windows to a thousand atoms, amidst the deafening applause of the multitude, who then retired unmolested by the military or police. A similar demonstration also occurred at the abode of the mayor, Mr. Wellens, where the band of the "Grand Harmony" had assembled for the purpose of serenading that functionary. However, as the illuminations successively faded away, the crowds gradually dispersed without committing further excesses, and the night passed off tranquilly. These occurrences were, however, a mere rehearsal, a prelude to graver events; for, as the riotous groups separated, they were heard significantly bidding each other to be prepared for the morrow.

On the following morning the playbills announced the long-expected signal for commotion. As the evening drew on, crowds infinitely more dense and turbulent than those that had collected on the previous day, congregated around the theatre and adjacent streets. Scarcely were the doors of the former opened, ere the house was invaded and filled to suffocation. Hundreds, being obliged to retire for lack of space, joined the multitude that occupied the square, or filled the neighbouring places of refreshment. Of this multitude, ninety-nine out of a hundred knew not why they had assembled; all were, however, ripe for mischief, and ready to perpetrate any act of outrage; they wanted nothing but a definite object and a positive impulse, and these stimulants were not long in being furnished. At this moment a battalion of steady troops, placed in column in the square, would have sufficed to intimidate these masses, and to control that fury which, in a few hours, succeeded in overwhelming the king's authority, and trampling the laws beneath their feet.

The numerous patriotic and revolutionary allusions which abound in the *Muette de Portici* were peculiarly

calculated to increase the feverish excitement of the turbulent spirits who came prepared for tumult, and who expressed by their outcries the unequivocal nature of their intentions. The rising of the curtain was hailed with bursts of approbation. Not a word escaped unnoticed; each political allusion, however trifling, was applauded; whilst those of a more pertinent nature were received with almost phrenzied acclamations. The exertions and ardour of the performers appeared to rise with the excitement of the audience. Between the acts, noisy groups filled the corridors and saloons, where they pledged each other in goblets of punch, and enthusiastically repeated the most striking passages of the play. Others were seen in animated converse in the vestibule, or communicating with such of their friends as lined the peristyle and external arcades.

As the representation advanced, the fever of the spectators increased. Shouts and vociferations of a seditious nature were constantly mingled with their plaudits, until at length the curtain fell amidst such confused and deafening uproars as even overwhelmed the loud echoes of the final explosion. In an instant, the excited audience rose up from their seats, and darting through the passage, poured into the open square, exclaiming, "to the office of the *National!*" This was answered by the mob, with shouts of "away! away!" The whole mass, as if moved by one impulse, now rushed towards the street in which was situated the establishment of the obnoxious journal. "In with the windows and doors!" was the signal of attack, and in a few seconds a volley of paving stones commenced the work of destruction.

Unobstructed by police or military, the rioters would not have been long in demolishing the whole building, had not a cry of "to his lodgings! to Libry Bagnano's! down with the felon!" directed their attention,

and turned their wrath into a new channel. The rabble, now augmented to a most formidable and overwhelming body, instantly obeyed this call, and rushed with maddening fury and the most outrageous shouts of "Down with Van Maanen!" "Long live De Potter!" towards the Polymathick Library, the residence of the detested editor. In less time than is requisite to write the words, locks, bolts, doors, and windows yielded to the assailants; and the whole dwelling, from the garret to the cellar, was invaded by the multitude. Whilst some were occupied in devastating the property, others, in a furious state of excitement or inebriation, sought for Libry, whose life would inevitably have fallen a sacrifice to their fury, had he not fortunately made his escape, at the first signal of the approaching tumult.

It is superfluous to detail the scene that ensued; suffice it to say that books, furniture, clothes, wines, and papers, every article, even to the very staircase, was pillaged or destroyed. Three times was this scene of plunder renewed, until not a vestige of the apartments remained save their damaged walls.

Excepting a few scattered gensdarmes, and one or two feeble patrols of infantry, who were easily kept at bay by the rioters, not a man of the garrison appeared. Yet the nature of the street, a long and narrow defile, offered every facility for the successful employment of force. Had a rapid and well-concerted movement been made, and two half battalions in column been ordered to advance, at the charge from the opposite ends of the Madelaine, the dsiorganized unarmed rabble must have fled through the narrow passages on either side; or, if they had offered resistance, must have been killed or captured. Had blood been shed, when the ruffians were engaged in the work of demolition, few would have regretted the fallen, or failed to have applauded the aven-

gers of the laws. For, at that moment, the outbreaking was but a vile act of plunder and misrule, a mere mob riot, unaccompanied by any of the characteristics that ennoble a popular revolution; it was a mere disgusting act of outrage, deplored and disavowed by every individual who has any respect for his own character. For who is there that will acknowledge that he was either the author or abettor of a scene that merited for its performers an eternal condemnation to those very galleys to which Libry Bagnano had been previously sentenced? The atrocities of that night must not, however, be confounded with their subsequent results, nor the causes with the effects. Still less must the vile actors be mistaken for those honourable men belonging to the chambers or press, who were the constitutional champions of their country's rights, and not the ruthless plunderers of their fellow-citizens.

In the meanwhile, every moment's delay on the part of the authorities added to the audacity of the populace, and gave a more decided and definite character to the riot. Encouraged by the apathy of the public force, the mob had already divided itself into several bands, nor were leaders wanting to guide them. The idea of attempting to resist the laws by force now first suggested itself. An attack was therefore made on the gunsmiths' shops, many of which were burst open and plundered, and the people having armed themselves with every species of weapon, hurried forth to commit still greater havoc. One body rushing towards the *Petit Sablon*, made a desperate and successful assault on the mansion of the minister of justice; whilst another either disarmed, or kept at bay, the small military guard at the neighbouring prison of the *Petits Carmes*.

The doors of the minister's house having been instantly forced, the rioters rushed with loud cries through

the apartments; some breaking and demolishing every thing within their reach, whilst others cast out of the windows, or dragged every portable article to the centre of the square, where a pile was made, and the whole committed to the flames. A cry of "fire the tyrant's house!" having been raised, fifty excited wretches seized burning brands, and darting into the edifice, dense columns of smoke and a burst of flame soon announced to the city this successful act of incendiarism. Still the military authorities did not interfere. A few gens-darmes, whose barracks were hard by, alone attempted to remonstrate; but they were instantly driven back, and advised for their own sakes to remain neuter. The firemen from the town-hall likewise hastened with their engines to the spot; but so intent was the populace on the work of destruction, that they prevented all attempts to quench the flames, and bade the firemen confine their efforts to the preservation of the neighbouring buildings.

In the meantime, another band, headed by a foreign adventurer, hurried to the abode of the police director, who appeared to be so little prepared for such an attack, that his wife and children were first aroused ftom their slumbers by the yells and thunders of the mob, as they assailed the house. Though no absolute violence was offered to the inmates, their terror may be imagined, for the work of devastation instantly commenced. Hangings, paintings, books, porcelaine, plate—in short every article of furniture, was torn down, or utterly demolished; and, although the principal object of the people was certainly not to rob, jewellery and plate of considerable value were carried off. Finding nothing more within the building whereon to vent their rage, the rioters dragged the carriages to the grand square, and there committed them to the flames, under the very eyes of the

public authorities and military guard. But neither one or the other moved a hand to the rescue.

As the night advanced, the audacity of the rioters seemed to increase; their previous success had wetted their appetite for mischief. The hotel of the provincial governor was attacked, and suffered the same fate as that of the police director; several manufactories were also broken open and devastated. In short, the whole city presented a fearful and disgusting scene of anarchy and lawless riot. Fury, confusion, or terror were then visible in every countenance. No one knew where the scene of devastation would end. Even some of those who had applauded the tumult at the theatre were terrified at the result, and united with the peaceable citizens in urging the authorities to do their duty. But the generals appeared spell-bound, and only answered these appeals by sending forth weak detachments that were instantly disarmed or put to flight, after firing one or two shots over the heads of the rioters.

It was not until day-break; not until the populace had revelled during several hours in uncontrolled licentiousness, and had commenced tearing down the royal insigna; in short, not until the riot had assumed a positive revolutionary character, and the difficulty of restoring order had been considerable enhanced, that General Bylandt, and his coadjutor, General Wauthier, roused themselves from their lethargy, and commenced a tardy development of the force at their disposal. But even then, the measures adopted were as ill calculated in principle, as they were inefficacious in their results.

There was neither combination or promptitude in the operations of the men, nor decision and common prudence in that of the generals. It was not, indeed, to be expected that the former should do their duty, when

they had such pitiful examples before them of weakness and want of presence of mind in their superiors.

Thus it often occurred that they were obliged to remain passive spectators of excesses they eagerly desired to chastise, or with tears of rage and shame in their eyes, were compelled to submit to the grossest insults and maltreatment. To such extraordinary lengths was the forbearance of the superior officers carried in some instances, that General Wauthier permitted himself to be insulted in a manner worthy of record.

Whilst this officer was standing at the head of his troops, an individual stepped from the surrounding crowd, advanced towards him, and after applying epithets the most injurious, placed his hand on the general's coat, and audaciously tore away the cross of the Belgic lion, which decorated his bosom. And yet Wauthier's sword hung by his side ! ! ! After such an example, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the military should be disheartened, and that the people should triumph.*

The non-commissioned and soldiers, many of whom were young militia men, soon saw the difficult nature of their own situation. They felt that to employ their weapons would be but a useless sacrifice of their own

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The "Ville Rebelle" contains the following note (page 193) respecting another general (Aberson). "Whilst the general was amusing himself in braying after this fashion, the mob (*canaille*) who surrounded him, thought proper to take the sword that hung by his side (if the farce had been carried a little further, nothing prevented their taking his charger, and slipping into its place a wooden horse, as befel Sancho Panza). When the general discovered that he had lost his sword, he exclaimed—'This is too bad really; come, *my children*, give me back my sword—I cannot live without my sword.' 'Give it him back,' said one of the bystanders, 'you see it is not a sword that will hurt any of us.'" It must be remembered that this note is from the pen of a devoted partisan of the Dutch

lives. The natural antipathy of man to shed the blood of his fellow-citizen, was augmented by the knowledge they had, that the measures adopted by the generals must inevitably lead to their own defeat and consequent destruction. "Can I depend on your men acting energetically?" said a commissary of police to an officer commanding one of the isolated detachments dispatched against the rioters; "will they employ their arms?"—"Not, if we are left without support," answered the other, "nor will I risk their lives of my own by giving the order!" This reply sufficiently proves the perfect knowledge the inferior officers had of the incapacity of their superiors, and of their own hopeless position.*

Here and there, especially in the front of M. Van Maanen's residence, some partial combats did take place, during the early part of the morning, and a few lives were lost on both sides. But all these efforts were isolated and ineffectual, and served but to augment the audacity of the people. Before ten o'clock on the 26th the guards and posts in the centre of the city had been overcome, or had tranquilly surrendered; and the troops having given way, either retreated to their barracks, or were withdrawn to the upper part of the city, where they piled arms in front of the king's palace, and

* It may not be irrelevant to cite a reply made under somewhat similar circumstances by an officer of horse artillery, who was stationed with two field-pieces in the stable-yard of Carlton-house during the corn-bill riots in London, ready to gallop forth at a moment's notice. One of the principal officers of the Regent's household coming to him said—"I am commanded to ask if you think your men will do their duty, and obey orders to fire, should such melancholy extremity be absolutely inevitable?"—"Fire, Sir!" rejoined the other, "you may tell his royal highness, with my humble duty, that if I command my people to fire on his royal highness's palace, there is no man can stop them but myself." The reader must excuse the anecdote in favour of its originality.

renounced all further attempt at suppressing the tumult.

Fortunately, for the ultimate safety of the city, which before mid-day was abandoned to the discretion of the people, several of the most wealthy and influential citizens, indignant at the weakness of the authorities, and dreading another night of anarchy, assembled at the barracks of the communal guards, and there, in concert with the officers of that force, immediately adopted measures for the organization of a burgher-guard. A public appeal was made to the zeal of the inhabitants, of whom great numbers instantly came forward, and having received arms, and formed themselves into companies, strong patrols were directed to circulate through the streets, whilst others took possession of the various posts that had been abandoned by the king's troops.

A council of notables also assembled at the town-hall, where it was decided to issue a proclamation, assuring the inhabitants that M. Van Maanen should be dismissed; that the responsibility of ministers should be established, and that the municipal "*mouture*" tax should be instantly abolished. Although this document contained promises entirely beyond the control or attributes of the local authorities, it was well calculated to appease the general irritation, and to produce a salutary effect amongst the lower orders, especially as it was followed by a second, of a nature still more precise and positive.*

These measures, combined with the zealous conduct of the citizens, who eagerly hastened to enrol themselves for the general security, produced the most beneficial results, the more so, since Count Felix de Mérode,

* See Appendix, No. 1.

Barons Vanderlinden d'Hoogvorst, Secus, and other persons of rank, wealth, and influence, were seen doing duty as private soldiers. The opposition journals also, though they did not stigmatize with sufficient severity the disgraceful outrages of the preceding night—for they themselves may be considered as accessaries before the fact—loudly called on the public to maintain order, and breathed sentiments of respect and obedience, not only to the king but to existing institutions. "We conjure all those inhabitants who possess any influence over the labouring population, to interfere promptly," said the *Courrier des Pays Bas.* "Let instant occupation be given to the working classes, even though it be useless; all who do not now return to order are culpable." Had this journal held similar laudable language on the preceding days, it would have been more opportune.

But who could have anticipated the extraordinary results of that night, or have dreamed that those persons intrusted with the maintenance of the laws should have contributed so largely to their subversion? Who could have predicted, that a mere theatre riot should have swollen into a popular revolt, which immediately paved the way to the dissolution of the monarchy; or that the outbreaking of a few hot-brained patriots should have formed the basis of that national emancipation, for which Belgium had vainly struggled during many centuries?

Towards the evening of the 26th, the revolt had assumed a more distinct and national character. The French tricolour, at first displayed as the symbol of liberty, gave way to the old red, black, and yellow banner of Brabant, which was seen waving from the windows of the town-hall. The cry of "*Vive la France!*" had yielded to that of "*Vive les Belges!*" The Orange cockade was proscribed as being an *individual* and not

a *national* emblem. The royal arms were likewise removed from the public and private edifices, more perhaps from terror on the part of the inmates of the latter than from any sentiment of hostility to the dynasty. Instances, it is true, were not wanting of the blackest ingratitude on the part of some individuals who were indebted for wealth and prosperity to the royal family; but these were exceptions, on which it would be unjust to found a general accusation.

Whilst these scenes were passing within the city, the neighbouring villages of Foret, Uccle, and Anderlecht had been the theatre of the most wanton and atrocious acts of outrage. Three bands of drunken miscreants sallied forth from the city towards dark, and taking advantage of the confusion and disorder reigning within Brussels, made simultaneous attacks on the factories of Messrs. Rey, Ball, and Wilson, which, together with about twenty country houses, were pillaged or burned. The loss sustained by the proprietors was valued at upwards of one million of florins. The leader and instigator of these hordes of bandits, was a man in easy circumstances, named Fontaine, who, as it appeared on his subsequent trial, had no motives for his conduct, but an execrable spirit of vengeance for some real or supposed wrong received at the hands of Mr. Wilson.

The respectable inhabitants being resolved to prevent the renewal of those disgraceful scenes, upwards of three thousand joined the ranks of the burgher-guard; and as various turbulent bodies of the lowest class were observed assembling towards dusk, whilst public rumour designated several houses as devoted to destruction, these armed citizens declared their firm intention of chastising the slightest act of aggression in the most summary manner. The companies having selected their own chiefs, established patrols, which scoured every part of

the city, dispersed the groups, and were generally preceded by a banner on which was inscribed "Liberty!" "Security!" or some other patriotic motto.

Although the shops remained closed, and all business was suspended, the market people assumed their usual stations, a multitude of curious persons traversed the streets to visit the various scenes of devastation, and at night the whole city was lighted up. The citizens having universally obeyed the municipal invitation to illuminate the fronts of their houses, the darkness caused by the destruction of the lamps was obviated by this measure; and as the burgher-guard had not for a moment relaxed its vigilance, the night passed off with perfect tranquillity.

In the meantime, the whole of the troops remained confined to their barracks, or bivouacked in front of the palace, in which Generals Bylandt, Wauthier, Aberson, and Aubremé had established their head-quarters. A verbal convention had been entered into between the first of these officers and the municipal authorities, by which it was stipulated that the military should remain perfectly passive until instructions should be received from the Hague. But a reinforcement of a regiment of hussars from Ghent, and two battalions of infantry, with eight field-pieces, were ordered to move on the capital with all possible despatch; a precaution that ought to have been taken several days previous, but which was utterly out of season when the first act of the revolution was consummated, and the authority of the government trampled under foot.

Notwithstanding this triumph of the people, and the removal of the royal insignia, there were no other symptoms of animosity, no overt outcry against the dynasty, nor even a talk of separation. The press and every other organ of public opinion, outwardly pro-

fessed a desire for the re-establishment of the government authority, accompanied by such concessions as were calculated to rally the nation round the throne. There was a party, an anti-national party, that had turned its eyes towards France from the instant of the "July days;" but they did not venture to declare their sentiments until a much later period.

The panacea universally called for was the removal of M. Van Maanen. "An unfortunate choice, dictated perhaps by generous affections," said the *Antwerp Journal*, "has long offended the nation. Let this man retire, and never again resume office amongst a magistracy that stands in eminent want of national confidence; but let us rely for this on the wisdom of the king."

The *Catholic*, a violent liberal journal of Ghent, thus expressed itself on the same subject:—"There is no salvation for the throne, but in an ample concession of our rights. The essential points to be accorded are, royal inviolability and ministerial responsibility; the dismissal of Van Maanen; uncontrolled liberty of education and the press; a diminution of taxation; equal protection to commerce, agriculture and industry, and a just distribution of places; in short, justice and liberty in all and for all, in strict conformity with the fundamental law."

The *Courrier des Pays Bas* also held language of a similar tenor. "The dismissal of M. Van Maanen must ever be the absolute condition of all pacification, the indispensable gage of a return to a better state of affairs. So long as he continues in office, the Belgians can have no confidence in the intentions of the government, nor slumber in deceitful security. We repeat that we are neither in a state of *insurrection nor revolution;* all we want is a mitigation of the grievances we have so long endured, and some guarantees for a better

future." There was surely nothing exaggerated in these demands, nothing that militated against the dignity or security of the throne, nothing that ought not to have been conceded long before, or that had not been enjoyed by every British subject for nearly two centuries.

If the monarchy could be saved by such concessions, it had been sound policy to try the experiment. Henry the Fourth thought Paris worth a mass; King William considered a minister of more value than a crown.

There may be some persons who may despise the verdict of the press, and sneer at the above citations as being the mere opinions of self-elected judges, and not those of a delegated body. But, in so doing, they will display little acquaintance with the march of events, or the formidable power of that engine in the Netherlands during the year 1830. At that period the Belgian press was eminently puissant; the numerous prosecutions levelled against it had strengthened its energies, awakened the sympathy of the great body of the nation, quadrupled its circulation, and gained for it a degree of attention and deference that it could not otherwise have attained. Skilfully availing itself of this influence, it gradually acquired a supremacy over men's minds, that may be looked on as the principal accessary to the revolution. As its influence was generally acknowledged by the public, and dreaded by the government, its judgments merit respect; not so much from their intrinsic logical worth, as from the thraldom in which they held the public mind, which blindly submitted to its guidance.

The action of the Belgian press during the latter months of the union, has been compared to the movement of the fore-limbs of a horse, which are instantly followed by, or rather forcibly attract, that of the posterior members; so that the direction of the one is considered utterly subservient on the impulse of the other.

In England, the position of the two are reversed: the journals, being for the most part pecuniary rather than political speculations, follow rather than direct public opinion, with such tact and rapidity, however, as to form a ray of the same light, rather than its shadow. But, on a minute investigation, and notwithstanding the consummate ability with which many are conducted, they may be said to go with, rather than before, the cause they advocate. Their arguments are consequences rather than causes; they are not the pioneers, but the rear-guard of national will.

On the morning of the 27th, fresh symptoms of effervescence again manifested themselves. The thirst of the lower orders for mischief having been increased by the latitude they had enjoyed during the night of the 25th, could not be restrained from breaking out; in despite of the efforts of the burgher-guard, which had been organized in sections, corresponding with the divisions of the city, and placed under the orders of Baron d'Hoogvorst, a vast body of the populace inundated the Place Royale and adjacent streets, and rushed into the park.

Here they instantly tore down the artificial preparations erected for the illuminations, destroyed the coloured lamps and ornaments, conveyed the wooden fragments to a central spot, and then setting fire to the pile, reduced the whole to ashes. At length, the burgher-guard having received reinforcements, the gardens were cleared, and tranquillity restored without further damage. The demoralizing effect of this scene on the regular troops, who were drawn up in column in front of the palace, may be better conceived than described. It would have been a thousand times better that they should have been removed altogether from the city, than that they should have been allowed to remain passive spectators of outrages so injurious to their loyalty and self-confidence.

Hitherto no positive collision had taken place between the burgher-guards and the people. But the latter being encouraged by the success of the morning, and their numbers being augmented by a multitude of idlers and vagabonds from the neighbouring villages, they evinced towards nightfall a decided inclination to commit the worst crimes. A body of these ruffians, whose avowed object was anarchy and pillage, threw themselves on a patrol on the Place Royale, and would perhaps have succeeded in paving the way to the most frightful disorders, had not the citizen commanding shown more presence of mind than had been displayed by the royal officers. Rapidly wheeling his party into line, he gave orders to repulse force by force, and a well-directed volley having stretched eight or ten of the rabble on the ground and wounded others, the rest dispersed. This prompt and unexpected measure produced the best results. It curbed the audacity of the populace, gave confidence to the burghers, and was the indisputable cause of the subsequent tranquillity. Had the barrier of public force once more been broken down--had the mob once more obtained the supremacy, the destruction of life and property would perhaps have been immense.

Intelligence having reached the city that the expected reinforcements were rapidly advancing, and that it was the intention of the generals to endeavour to reinstall the military authority, to disarm the citizens, and to declare the town in a state of siege, the utmost excitement was created. The popular leaders openly announced their resolution to prevent the entry of these troops into the city. The two cannon abandoned by the Dutch general, were taken possession of by the people. It was resolved to erect barricades, and to hoist the standard of undisguised revolt, unless the advance of the reinforcements was instantly countermanded.

So great was the popular excitement, that it was deemed prudent by the notables and municipal authority to send a deputation to General Bylandt, urging him to anticipate the evils that must ensue from any forcible attempt on the part of the troops to enter the town; and without force, it was declared they should not be admitted. Not sorry to have a pretext for preventing any further collision between the military and people, the general assured the deputation that their request should be attended to; that the progress of the reinforcements should be immediately stayed; and that the troops forming the garrison should continue passive until the return of the deputation, which the citizens were about to dispatch to the Hague. On the other hand, the burghers solemnly engaged to respect the neutrality of the soldiers, and to maintain the security and peace of the city. Two proclamations announced the issue of this interview.*

On the same evening, the most influential citizens assembled at the town-hall, where it was unanimously resolved that an address to the king should be drawn up, containing a firm, but respectful exposure of their grievances, and that this document should be conveyed to the Hague by five persons, selected for their respectability and influence in different stations of life.†

In the meantime, the intelligence of the last four days' proceedings spread rapidly through the provinces, where it produced extraordinary excitement. Every friend of social order looked with disgust on the outrages committed on the first night, whilst they warmly applauded the measures adopted by the citizens to restore order, and to obtain that instant redress of grievances so earnestly and generally demanded. But with the ex-

* See Appendix, No. 2 and 3. † See Appendix, No. 4.

ception of Liege and Verviers, where at that time a portion of the commercial interests earnestly desired a union with France, no appearance of disaffection was shown; and though all parties united in the call for concessions, not the slightest wish for separation, or any sentiments hostile to the dynasty, were publicly expressed.

Antwerp and Ghent remained perfectly tranquil. The season of the year being the most favourable for commerce, full employment was given to the population of the one, and immense orders from the society of commerce found ample occupation for the labouring classes at the other. Some symptoms of disorder had manifested themselves at Louvain, Mons, and other towns; but they were not attended by any decided acts of outrage. As the troops in the different garrisons were kept on the alert, and the governors of provinces issued proclamations calling together the communal guards, it was hoped that the return of the deputations from the Hague with a favourable reply to the addresses, would fully suffice to restore order, and to re-establish the supremacy of the government by removing all pretext for further discontent.

The terror and confusion of the British residents in Brussels during the first two or three days, exceed all description. Ignorant of the politics of the country, and utterly unprepared for the alarming scenes of the night of the 25th, or the confusion that subsequently ensued, some fled to Antwerp, others to France, and many deemed themselves scarcely secure when they passed the frontiers, or reached the British packets at Ostend or Rotterdam. Those who remained, armed themselves and servants, and mounted guard either in front or in the interior of their houses. Reports of the most frightful description passed from mouth to mouth, and were propagated with the wildest exaggeration by the fugi-

tives, or in letters from those who remained, to their correspondents in the provinces.

In addition to other inconveniencies, the unpleasant situation of those who had been unable to depart, or had courage to remain, was augmented at night by the report of fire-arms either discharged out of mere wantonness, or directed against marauders, who availed themselves of the occasion to commit acts of depredation. In the day-time, the insolent conduct of some of the armed burghers was an additional cause of annoyance; for, dreading the departure of the foreigners, they demanded the payment of their bills at the point of the sword, well knowing that from the banks being closed, no specie could be procured even by those who had unlimited credit.

The events of July and August in Paris and Brussels, have given rise to grave discussions as to the extent to which governments are warranted to proceed in maintaining existing institutions and asserting the supremacy of the laws. The condemnation of the minister Polignac would appear to resolve the question in favour of the people; but the most ardent defenders of the liberty of the subject will surely admit that it is the paramount duty of every government to crush riot and anticipate revolution, by the employment of all the repressive means at its disposal. In the one case, that is of riot, the only agent that can be employed is force; in the other, the question is removed to another and a higher ground, and demands more caution, but not less energy. But it is scarcely proper to draw conclusions from two cases, which, though they produced similar results, were totally different in their origin.

A spirited writer attempted to defend the French ministers for firing on the people by saying, "that according to all accounts, the first popular movements

that took place in Paris to resist the execution of the royal ordonnances, were not composed of individuals who bore any share in the legislature, and who consequently could be looked on as legitimate representatives of national opinion. No peer, no deputy, no judicial or administrative functionary participated in it. Until then the rising was a mere riot, and would have been considered in no other light in England and America. At a subsequent period, some deputies did certainly attempt to negotiate with Marshal Marmont, and it would have been more prudent to have listened to their representations. But it is not less true that they acted of their own accord; that the chambers not being assembled, they could not make any legislative remonstrance. The peers also remained silent, and the magistracy followed their example. The movement was, therefore, devoid of all legal forms, or rather of all constitutionality or rationality. The ministry were justified in regarding it as a riot; and in firing, not on what is called the people, but on what the English designate as the mob, a term only to be rendered in French by *populace*."*

The reasoning is infinitely more applicable to the events of the 25th of August than those of the July days. For, admitting that it may be as difficult to draw the line of demarcation between mob riot, and popular revolt or revolution, as to distinguish two twin brothers at their first issuing into the world, yet the features of the Paris movement differed as essentially from those of the Belgian outbreaking as two children of different sexes born of different parents. The one sprung at once into the world a very giant, against whom all opposition became an act of *lèse* nationality. It was stamped, at first

* "Trois Lettres au Duc de Broglie sur les Prisonniers de Vincennes." Gand, 1830.

starting, with all the characteristics of undisguised revolution. It was levelled directly and immediately, not at the mere overthrow of a minister, or the withdrawal of obnoxious edicts, but at the subversion of a worn-out dynasty. It was essentially national and universally popular. Its object was clear and defined; it was promoted by the wealthy, applauded by the powerful, and executed by the middling classes and people. Excepting a portion of the aristocracy of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, and a few Vendean chiefs, who subsequently rallied round the Duchess of Berry, it met with no opposition, and was as complete and bloodless as the revolution of 1668 in England; and whilst it united almost every heart at home, it conquered the sympathies of all generous minds abroad, and quickly obtained the ratification of all foreign governments.

The other, on the contrary, was to all intents and purposes a mere mob riot, with scarce a symptom of nationality. It is true there was a cry of "Down with the Dutch!" and the royal arms and Orange emblems were removed; but the battle-cry at the outset was "*Vive la France.*" The French, and not the Belgian tri-colour, was hoisted as the rallying signal, and the rising at its birth was a mere rabble tumult, whose disgraceful character was calculated to injure the cause of liberty, and to cast as black a stain on the national character as the foul and atrocious conduct of the Bristol incendiaries on that of England. Beyond the dismissal of M. Van Maanen and the annihilation of M. Libry's presses, it appeared to have no definite object. In its earliest stage, it was deplored at home and deprecated abroad. It commenced in the dark, and the future was veiled in obscurity. Hazard and the force of events, rather than foresight and sound policy, were the only stars that lighted it. When an illustrious diplomatist answered that

the Belgic question would terminate "by hazard," his reply showed a much more consummate knowledge of the subject in all its bearings than the words seemed to import.

Had the troops, or rather the generals commanding, done their duty in the first instance, and had the monarch and his sons hastened to the capital, and made those anticipatory concessions that were pointed out by policy and sound sense, it is more than probable that the riot would never have assumed any other character. Helvetius says, "that the man the most guilty of treason to monarchy is he that advises his sovereign to press the weight of his authority too severely on the people." This maxim was essentially applicable to the advisers of King William up to the last day preceding the revolt. But if ever there was an occasion when it was necessary to treat riot as riot, and not as revolution, and to let loose the whole force of the law on the populace, it was during the night of the 25th of August.

> "Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
> Inciderit."

But when this god does appear, let him come forth armed with all the might and terror of offended justice and incensed majesty. In England, where riots are so frequent as to become a matter of trite occurrence, the destruction of a few panes of glass seems to be looked on as a mere letting of blood, a species of popular febrifuge. The police, on most occasions, arrives too late, the military only prepare to move, a few heads and windows are broken, and the parish pays the bill. But if the patient show further inflammatory symptoms, the riot act is read, the peace-breakers are outlawed, police and military do their duty with unblenching firmness, and if loss of life ensue, no reasonable man deplores the

fallen, or blames the public authorities. An inquest is held; an investigation, solemn, patient, and minute, takes place; and a jury of citizens, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, honourably acquit both government and its agents. Such would, most probably, have been the issue of the eventful 25th of August, had General Bylandt and the Regency done their duty.

The supineness of these authorities, coupled with other coincidences, excited strong suspicions that the riots of the 25th, though not absolutely provoked, were not altogether undesired by the government; and that, in lieu of resolving to apply preventive measures, they sought to hurry on the anticipated explosion, and thus create an opportunity for crushing the revolutionary hydra, ere it had reached more dangerous maturity. Such machiavelic policy can, however, be scarcely possible. For it is hardly to be imagined that men capable of concocting a stratagem of this flagitious nature, should indirectly connive at a popular movement without being well prepared to fall with overwhelming force on the rioters, and reap the fruits of their artifice by annihilating them at one blow.

But these are mere suspicions. An impenetrable mystery envelops the whole business; there are no proofs, oral or documentary. The surmises are based on one or two collateral circumstances, and not on direct testimony. One of these is the total silence maintained by two of the generals, Wauthier and Aberson, whose conduct was inculpated in terms the most damning to men of honour; whilst the third, General Bylandt, limited his defence to the publication of one or two pamphlets in the Dutch language. * These suspicions were ag-

* "Verhaal van het oproer te Brussel op den 25 Augustus, 1831." Gravenhaege, 1831.

gravated, by the government not having brought these three officers to public trial, and thus proving to all Europe, that, if the generals had failed in their duty, the ministry had faithfully executed theirs. This was the more extraordinary; for it appears, from the following dispatch of the minister of war to General Bylandt, that the latter had expressed some desire to exculpate himself.

"*The Hague*, 22*d November*, 1830.

"In conformity to the king's orders, I have the honour to inform you, in reply to your two letters, addressed the one to his majesty and the other to me, that H. M. thinks it reasonable in every point of view that you should desire to justify yourself from the blame that may attach to your conduct, as provincial commandant of S. Brabant, during the revolt that broke out at Brussels. The most regular manner of satisfying this desire, is by presenting yourself before the supreme military court, in conformity to the disposition of the 52d § of the provisional instructions for that court, in order to purify yourself from this accusation. As to the forms to be observed in the process, you must refer to the proceedings adopted by the ancient courts of Holland down to 1810, according to the 75th § of the said instruction."

(Signed) "De EERENS."

Although the above letter was inserted by order of the minister in the official journals, neither the general or government took any further steps. This silence was, therefore, regarded as evidence of collusion between both, and furnished matter for asserting, that the general could not justify himself without inculpating those in authority over him, and thereby unveiling that machiavelism laid to their charge.

It is asserted, in the next place, that M. Vanderfosse, civil governor of S. Brabant, had repeatedly warned

the ministers that a dangerous fermentation and most turbulent spirit existed throughout the whole province under his jurisdiction; that a crisis was nigh at hand; that it was highly important to avoid every measure that might afford pretext for any display of popular feeling; that it would be prudent to keep the military in constant readiness for action; and, if it was not considered politic to reinforce the garrison, that it would be proper to direct General Chassé and the Duke of Saxe Weimar, who commanded at Antwerp and Ghent, to hold a body of chosen troops in readiness, to march on the capital at a moment's notice.

He further urged with mistaken zeal the policy of postponing the fireworks and illuminations prepared for the birth-day, affirming that, in the event of riot, the vicinity of the park to the palace and public offices might endanger the safety of these edifices, and offer an additional stimulant to the malevolence of the people.

The only part of the governor's advice that appears to have been attended to, was that touching the illumination; but, to his surprise, and to that of every friend of the crown, instead of avoiding exciting measures, the *Muette de Portici*, which had been forbidden during many months, was *peremptorily ordered* to be reproduced on the night of the 25th of August.

There is certainly matter for deep consideration and astonishment in this latter fact. But, after all, these are but vague surmises—proofs rather of a vacillating and incredulous policy, than of any malevolent intention.

CHAPTER X

CABINET COUNCIL HELD AT THE HAGUE—OFFER OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE TO PROCEED TO BRUSSELS, REJECTED—HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS AND PRINCE FREDERICK DIRECTED TO PROCEED TO ANTWERP—ENTHUSIASM OF THE DUTCH PEOPLE—THE PRINCES ISSUE A PROCLAMATION, AND ADVANCE TO VILVORDE AT THE HEAD OF A SMALL CORPS—BRUSSELS BARRICADED—DEPUTATION OF PRINCE DE LIGNE AND OTHERS TO VILVORDE—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE ENTERS BRUSSELS—HIS CONDUCT ON THE OCCASION—HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS APPOINTS A COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE GRIEVANCES.

THE dispatches announcing the events of the 25th and 26th, reached the king at his palace of Loo, in the afternoon of the 27th. This intelligence, as unexpected as it was overwhelming, is said to have affected the monarch even to tears. No sooner, however, had he recovered from the first painful emotions of grief and indignation, than he hastened to the Hague with his two sons. A cabinet council was instantly convoked, and attended by the Prince of Orange as president, and the whole of the ministers except M. Van Gobelschroy, who was then at Brussels. The tendered resignation of M. Van Maanen having been refused by the king, a most animated discussion took place between the prince-royal and the unpopular minister, to whom H. R. H. attributed all the tribulations that menaced the state. The latter, being supported by the king and several of his colleagues, strongly insisted on the adoption of rigorous measures. All concession to a city, in an open state of revolt, was deprecated as incompatible with the dignity and honour of the crown, and as a dangerous precedent, subversive of the principles of legitimate government.

All negociation with rebels and traitors was looked on as calculated to strengthen their audacity, and as an indirect recognition of the right of popular insurrection. Submission was declared to be an essential preliminary to concession.

"The cause of the king," said they, "is that of all crowned heads. The Netherlands kingdom has been placed by the allies as a constitutional dyke between democratic France and monarchical Europe. The eyes of all nations are on the barrier monarchy, which they have raised with so much care, watched over with so much jealousy, and certainly will not lightly abandon. Even were a Tory administration not in power, Great Britain never would renounce those principles that have formed the basis of her foreign policy during two centuries. The Dutch are her natural continental allies; the co-operation of an English fleet and army may be relied on in case of emergency. Let the rebels be first made sensible of their error, and then pardoned! Let them first acknowledge the omnipotence of the government, and then benefit by its clemency! But it is not for them to dictate terms to the throne, or to wrest by force that which they are only entitled to sue for as a boon. The feebleness of monarchs, oftener than the firmness of ministers, have led to the downfall of empires."

More politic than his colleagues, the Prince of Orange is stated to have warmly contested these opinions. He not only most earnestly recommended conciliatory measures, but implored his father to accept the resignation of M. Van Maanen, and to listen in other matters to the supplications of his southern subjects. Whilst he reprobated the insult offered to the crown and his family, by the suppression of the royal insignia, and stigmatized the outrages committed by an infuriated populace, he justly attributed these acts to the sudden ebullition of

a few, and not to the premeditated workings of the many. "Grant them what they have a right to demand at our hands," exclaimed the prince; "satisfy the people, by forthwith listening to their complaints; offer them some guarantees for the future—and these outward symbols of rebellion will soon be removed, and the moral wounds of the country instantly healed. Besides, is it worth while to sacrifice a kingdom for a colour, or to risk the safety of the monarchy for a question of precedence? If concession be necessary, let it be granted by, not torn from you. A few thousands will repair the injury done by the populace; millions cannot repurchase a lost crown! Trust not to our allies, or to Great Britain. In the present state of public feeling throughout Europe, it is neither the policy or interest of the one or other to interfere in our favour. If we throw down the glove, we must confide in our own good swords alone; for England, having acknowledged the revolution of July, will not risk a general war to put down that of August. Let precautionary measures be ordered. Let us show that we are determined to maintain the rights vested in us by the allies; but let us avoid all acts that may increase the evil we desire to suppress. Let us shun civil war, until this partial insurrection (for at present it is nothing more) shall have assumed such positive revolutionary character, as will leave us no other alternative, but to endeavour to preserve by the sword that which we cannot maintain by conciliatory measures."

Confident in the popularity he had so long enjoyed, and trusting to the loyalty of the Belgian people, his royal highness further offered to proceed alone to Brussels. He prayed to be intrusted with full powers to treat, and to be the bearer of those good tidings of concession and reconciliation which would be more efficacious in rallying all hearts round the throne than any

demonstration of force. Unfortunately, this prudent advice was overruled. It was determined that instant measures should be adopted to prove to *four* millions of Belgians that they were but the vassals of *two* millions of Dutch—an inferior people in a state of groundless revolt, and not a superior nation excited to a pitch of insurrectionary phrenzy by long endurance of oppressive grievances.

Strong and energetic language is stated to have passed on this occasion, not only between the prince and the minister, whom the king insisted on retaining in office, but between the monarch and his son. At length, being compelled to yield to the will of the majority, the latter received instructions to proceed, without loss of time, to Belgium, accompanied by his younger brother. The one being charged with the command of the troops, and the other with a negative, temporizing mission; from which it was evident no good results could ever arise. For although the Prince of Orange may have been invested with full powers, it is clear from the sequel, that these powers were to collect evidence, but not to pronounce verdicts.

Their royal highnesses reached Antwerp on the 29th, and on the following day their arrival in that city was announced to the southern provinces by a proclamation. This document was generally considered extremely vague and unsatisfactory, from its containg little allusion to the general question, and being principally devoted to the adoption of vigorous measures for the security of the fortress.*

In the meanwhile most active preparations were commenced in the war department. The two battalions of grenadiers, with all the disposable forces in the

* See Appendix, No. 5.

vicinity of the Hague, were marched to Rotterdam, whence they embarked for Antwerp. The troops of all arms, especially the cavalry and artillery—which, for the greater convenience and facility of procuring forage, were principally cantoned in the northern provinces—were directed to move with the utmost speed from Utrecht and Friesland on Belgium, or to concentrate, according to circumstances, on the head-quarters of their respective divisions. The whole of the reserves and supernumerary militia were ordered to rejoin their battalions, by virtue of the 209th section of the fundamental law, and the communal guards (*Schuttery*) were called out on permanent duty. Indeed, so great was the excitement and indignation awakened throughout the northern provinces at the intelligence from Brussels, that many of these sedentary corps offered to march against the "rebels," whilst numerous companies of volunteers eagerly enrolled themselves for the same purpose.

The long-suppressed jealousies and hatred of the Dutch towards their southern brethren, which was by no means inferior to the animosity felt by the latter for the people of the north, now broke forth in the most unbounded expressions of vituperation and defiance. The universal cry of "*down with the rebels! up with Orange!*" arose from all corners of the Old Netherlands. Contempt and disgust at the insurrectionary daring of a people whom they had long despised, was universally felt by the descendants of those men who had burst asunder the chains of Philip, who had bid defiance to the terrible Alba, whose troops had often defeated the most valiant soldiers of Europe, and whose fleets had triumphantly swept the ocean and spread terror even in the capital of Great Britain. They imagined that they had little else to do than to proclaim their avenging arrival, and that the "rebel city" would

send forth its best citizens to renew the ignominious scene inflicted on Ghent by Charles V. But they miscalculated their own force, and the weakness of their adversaries, as much as they overrated the wisdom of their government, and undervalued the sentiments that animated the Belgians.

So prejudiced, so ignorant of the precise nature of the question at issue were people in general, that even the liberal press in England almost universally sympathized with the Netherlands government, and advocated the adoption of the most energetic repressive measures. Nor does the diplomatic corps appear to have been more enlightened than the public, as to the state of national feeling in Belgium, or as to the causes that gradually paved the road to the insurrection.

In lieu of exerting whatever influence it might have possessed with the crown or ministry, to warn them of the precipice on which they stood, more than one ambassador also joined in the outcry, and encouraged them to the charge. It may be said that it was not their duty to interfere with the national affairs of other states; but, in this instance, it was incumbent on them to come forwards: for the question was European, and essentially calculated to involve the tranquillity of all other nations. Seeing only the dark side of the picture, as regarded the contest of the Brussels rioters—being too confident in the strength of the Netherlands government—judging the outbreaking to be the mere reflection of the French revolution, they confounded, in their indignation, the outrages committed by a vile populace with the firm resistance of the respectable citizens, and mistook the explosion produced by a denial of justice for a premeditated desire for a reunion with France.

Trembling for the further propagation of that republican spirit which, at a later period, found only fifteen

advocates out of 200 members in the congress, and few supporters out of doors; as much deceived as to the purpose, as they were little acquainted with the true causes, that led to the insurrection, the foreign diplomatists and the courts they represented completely mistook the real position of the question. The Belgian grievances, which no one seemed to have studied, or if they had studied, no one would acknowledge, were weighed according to the value attached to them by the royal message of the 11th December, 1829, and not according to their real merits. They were reprobated as "pretended and trifling," and yet, as was pithily observed, by an able writer, "Suppose England had been governed by a Scotch king and family, in the same manner as Belgium was governed by the Dutch monarch, would the grievances of Englishmen have been deemed trifling?"*

Suppose, for instance, that English barristers, soldiers, sailors, diplomatists, or other public functionaries were compelled to plead, write, and speak in Gaelic; that five commissions out of six in the British army were given to Scotchmen; that English Protestant children were obliged to be educated in Scotch colleges, or under instructors appointed by a presbyterian Scotch king; that the Courts of Chancery and King's Bench were removed to Edinburgh; that a dying man could not make his will in any other tongue than Gaelic; in short, suppose that any of the grievances, of which ample details have been furnished, were inflicted on England, would Englishmen have tranquilly submitted, or would any one have dared to stigmatize them as *pretended?* And yet such was the opinion, and such it is at the present hour, with those who, either from preju-

* Examiner, No. 1184, p. 644.

dice or ignorance, will not stoop to examine the question in its proper bearings.

Though the fundamental law and the treaties that ordained the union had been violated in more than one instance, no sooner did the insurrection break loose than government recurred to the constitution as an excuse for avoiding immediate concession. "Charles X. has been hurled from his throne for violating the charter; let your majesty answer the eager cries of your people for instant redress, by adhering firmly to yours. Let the chambers be convoked, and thus, whilst you gain time, let the result rest with the representatives of the people. They complain of your system of *arrêtés*, show them now that you are resolved to adhere to the constitution." Such was the specious but fallacious advice given to the monarch by his own ministers, and supported by more than one foreign ambassador.

In conformity, therefore, with the powers vested in the throne by the 97th section of the fundamental law, an extraordinary assembly of the chambers was convoked at the Hague for the 12th of September, by a cabinet order of the 28th of August, a measure that excited the reclamations of most of the southern deputies, the majority of whom at first decided not to obey the royal mandate. As the ordinary legislative session would take place *de jure* at Brussels in October, it was asked why the extraordinary convocation could not have been held in the southern provinces, in lieu of forcing the Belgian deputies to proceed to the north, merely to give them the trouble of returning in a few days? If the meeting was urgent, why should a delay of fourteen days be announced, when it only required twenty-four hours to remove from one end of the country to the other?

It was further argued by the Belgians, and not with-

out just grounds, that as soon as a question of concession was agitated, the crown had jesuitically retrenched itself behind the fundamental law and States-General, and placed the matter in the hands of that representation, of which it knew it *commanded* a majority. On fifty preceding occasions, when obnoxious measures were to be adopted, the king had been less scrupulous. Then, he had not deigned to consult the voice of the nation, but had acted on that system of *arrêtés* which had caused such universal discontent. The trial by jury had been abolished by a simple *arrêté*; the liberty of the press and education had been shackled by *arrêtés*; and the supreme court had been tranferred to the Hague by an *arrêté*; why then not remove all these grievances by the same prompt method, and afterwards introduce a law to solemnize the act. It was a mockery of man's intellect to refuse to grant concessions by any other organ than legislation, when an arbitrary system had so often been adopted to inflict penalties.

If the convocation of the chambers was necessary (and that it was so, is indubitable), it would have been infinitely more politic to have assembled them instantly at Antwerp, if not at Brussels. Such a measure might have been considered a dangerous condescension, and a bad compliment to the north; but the paramount object of the moment was not to flatter the vanity, or fortify the loyalty of one people, who, in fact, needed no such stimulant, but to captivate the good will and allay the fears of the other, who were wavering in their allegiance.

The presence of the sovereign could not fail to be beneficial in the southern provinces. It would have afforded him an excellent pretext for hastening to the scene of trouble, and for declaring by proclamation that he trusted fully to the loyalty of the people; that he

gave them the utmost possible proof of his confidence, by thus convoking the chambers in the south, and coming amongst them with no other safeguard than the rectitude of his intentions, the conviction of deserving their support, and the firm resolution of instantly adopting means to redress their grievances. But that unseasonable energy, that dim-sighted policy, which has been pursued down to the latest period, was the line determined upon from the first, and unfortunately adhered to, down to the last moment. Its pernicious fruits rapidly reached maturity.

Whilst matters were in this state in Holland, the princes removed their head-quarters on the 31st of August from Antwerp to Vilvorde, where three battalions of the 19th infantry, with two squadrons, and eight field-pieces, previously intended to reinforce the Brussels garrison, had halted since the 27th. The 6th hussars, with one battalion of the 5th infantry, and half a battery, echeloned between Ghent and Alost, were ordered to close on Assche, and to communicate by their left with Vilvorde. Posts were thrown out from the latter place to Laaken, and this small corps assumed the air of an advanced guard before an enemy. Scarcely had the royal brothers reached Vilvorde, ere Colonel H. de Cruquenbourg, aide-de-camp to the Prince of Orange, was directed to proceed to Brussels with despatches for General d'Hoogvorst, inviting the latter to present himself at the head-quarters, in order to concert measures for the pacification of the city, and the restoration of legitimate power into the hands of the king's generals.

On the arrival of Colonel Cruquenbourg, a meeting was instantly convened at the town-hall to deliberate on the royal propositions, and in the course of a few hours General d'Hoogvorst, attended by five of the most influential citizens, obeyed the prince's summons. This de-

putation was instructed to intreat their royal highnesses to prevent the further advance of the troops on Brussels; to declare respectfully but firmly that the people would not admit a single soldier more within their walls, until M. Van Maanen was dismissed and their grievances were redressed; and, finally, to implore the princes to visit the city, in order to witness the real state of affairs and to listen with their own ears to the complaints of the citizens. The deputation was further instructed to request, as a *sine qua non*, that their royal highnesses should come *alone*, or without other escort than their personal staff, and to trust to the loyalty and good faith of the people; and not only to answer on their heads for the security of the princes, but to assure them that this mark of confidence would be hailed with enthusiasm by the whole population.

On the same day General Bylandt officially announced to the public the reception of despatches from the king, stating "that his Majesty had declared his readiness to receive the deputation sent to the Hague, and that, although he had been deeply affected by the deplorable events of the 25th and 26th, he had expressed his satisfaction and admiration at the conduct of the burgher-guards." This admission of the praiseworthy behaviour of the citizens was not unmerited, though it has not been duly appreciated by Europe in general. Through the inertness and incapacity of the authorities, the moral as well as physical supremacy of the government was as completely overthrown by midday on the 26th, as though it had never existed. The law had become a dead letter, for it was in the hands of the populace, who held the city at their mercy. They might have sacked, burned, and devastated to their heart's content, for the arm of power was paralyzed. Anarchy, rapine, and bloodshed might have reigned

paramount, had not Barons d'Hoogvorst and Secus, Count Mérode, Messrs. Van der Weyer, Van der Smissen, Rouppe, Engler, Palmaert, Méeus, and other citizens, instantly sprung forward, and, at their own risk and peril, stemmed the dangerous torrent.

The grossest misrepresentations having gone abroad as to the conduct of these citizens, it is indispensable to proclaim their honourable patriotism and devotion on this occasion; and to affirm that, whilst they ardently coalesced with their fellow-countrymen in a determination to resist oppression, they looked with tears of shame and regret on the excesses committed by the populace, and were unanimous in flying to arms to arrest the progress of an evil that tended to throw the foulest disgrace on the national cause. They advocated "freedom in everything and for every one," but they loathed popular tyranny. They went with the book of the constitution in their hands, and required no other concession than the full execution of the fundamental law. Whilst they deplored the excesses committed by the people, they were ready to defend their just reclamations. They were intimately acquainted with the temper and wants of the mass, and, had their councils been attended to—had the government frankly, unreservedly entered into the path of conciliation recommended by them, all subsequent misfortunes might have been avoided.

An administrative separation was perhaps inevitable, but the dynasty would have remained intact. For, those who pretend that there was a general desire for a reunion with France, or even a total separation from Holland, knew nothing of the state of public feeling at that period. Even the demand for administrative separation, though it certainly lurked in many minds from the first promulgation of the Catholic union, was little thought of publicly

until, on the avowal of the royal brothers at Vilvorde, it was found that the Prince of Orange was vested with powers to listen, but not to grant. It was then generally apprehended that the government was not only adverse to concession, but that it was merely temporizing, in order to afford time for concentrating such an overwhelming force as would render resistance hopeless. In this they did not err, for the mission of the prince was utterly infructuous; and had the force or half the force that surrounded Brussels at a later period been judiciously employed, the revolution had little prospect of success.

The absolute separation may be said to have been the sole offspring of the inconceivable military failure of September, and not the fruits of the French revolution. It was that ill-conducted attack, which raised an insuperable barrier to all further approachment. Prince Frederick battered down the throne; General Chassé reduced it to cinders. Upon this point, diplomacy as well as public opinion was long grievously deceived. Lord Ponsonby was the first person who penetrated the mystery, and saw a glimmering of light where all else was darkness.

A portion of diplomacy itself eagerly co-operated in concealing the truth, having cogent but opposite motives to induce the powers, especially England, to attribute greater influence to France than she actually possessed. On the one hand, the Netherlands diplomatists were desirous to awaken the fears of the allies, in order to induce them to coalesce in supporting their cause; whilst, on the other, the French artfully availed themselves of the arguments of the Dutch to induce other nations to listen to their demands, and in fact to play their game. "The grievances of the Belgic rebels," said the Dutch, "are but pretended; this cry for separation is but a mere pretext. The insurrection is the

whole and sole work of the Propagand. The dynasty of Louis-Philippe cannot resist the flow of jacobinism that is rife through all ranks in France; the movement party will ere long obtain the supremacy. The reunion with that country, long projected, is generally desired; unless you hasten to fill Belgium with bayonets, your barrier will be overturned, and the French will be masters of the Meuse and Rhine. It is for this purpose that De Brouckère, Le Hon, and Stassart, have visited Paris, and have leagued themselves with Lafayette, Maugin, Lamarque, and Odillon Barot. Our cause is that of monarchy thoughout the world; let the contagion of democracy spread to Belgium, and you destroy the last safeguard of legitimacy."

On the other hand, the French artfully observed, "it is true, the general voice of the Belgian people is with us, they unanimously sigh to associate themselves with the destinies of 'young France.' Their manufactories, collieries, and agriculturists are anxious for the wide scope of our market. The ambition of their deputies looks to our chambers, and their barristers turn a wistful eye to our courts. A spirit of democracy certainly does pervade the youth of the country, and if a change takes place with us, the reaction will, we fear, be inevitably felt by our neighbours. We do not seek for aggrandizement, God knows; but it may be forced upon us. It is your policy to aid in making us strong and powerful, that we may bear up against republicanism. Strengthen our young monarchy, and we will answer for the consequences; but if the movement party once gain the ascendancy, the flower is there, and it will inevitably be cropped, and heaven knows in what direction the winds may bear its seeds." Fortunately for the material interests of Great Britain, the representations of

France prevailed over those of Holland, and peace was maintained.

Taking the question of a reunion with France abstractedly, it may be said to have been essentially anti-national, more especially at the first commencement of the Belgian disturbances. For the anti-Catholic spirit that had broken out in France had alarmed the Belgian clergy, who dreaded the propagation of Voltarian philosophy as much as they detested those of Gomar or the Josephites. It is true, that the clothiers of Verviers, the armourers of Liege, some of the colliers of Hainault, a portion of the Wallon barristers, and a few, very few, deputies, did turn their eyes to France; but Brabant, Limbourg, Antwerp, with the powerful and influential Flanders, were adverse to a measure that threatened them with grievous consequences. They had sufficient remembrance of the past, as well as political sagacity enough for the future, to see that such a step must lead to instant war, and regenerate those conflicting questions that had converted their fertile plains into a perpetual theatre of bloodshed and devastation during three centuries. They loved France as a friendly neighbour, but not as a mistress. They did not wish to see their capital converted into the chief town of a French department, their rivers closed by a revival of the barrier-system, their church reduced to insignificance, or their civil and military functions filled by an inundation of Frenchmen. They wished to rid themselves of Dutch monopoly, but not to exchange it for that of France. "My friends," said a little popular pamphlet, published early in 1831, "I love the French exceedingly—but I like them in their own homes, not in mine. I love them as neighbours, but not as masters. I do not want to see Belgium fall into the hands of a cloud of poor and meagre fellows, who will fatten and enrich them-

selves at our cost, by taking all the best places. I do not want to see the grass growing in the streets."*

Such was the state of public feeling at the period the deputation of citizens quitted Brussels to wait on the princes at Vilvorde, where on their arrival they were received with the utmost affability, especially by the Prince of Orange. But their royal highnesses, being only invested with limited powers, and being unable to offer any guarantees, demanded, as a preliminary measure, the restoration of the royal insignia, and declared their intention not to separate themselves from their troops. D'Hoogvorst and his colleagues having vainly attempted to obtain some modification to these demands, declined the responsibility of consenting, and having taken leave returned to the city to consult their fellow-citizens. The conversation that passed on both sides, on this memorable occasion, was energetic and unconciliatory; for Mr. Rouppe, one of the most respectable and esteemed citizens of Brussels, now mayor of that city, having been first admitted into the prince's cabinet with D'Hoogvorst, his royal highness's eye instantly fell upon the tri-coloured ribbon worn by them in their hats and button-holes.

"Are you aware, Sirs," said he, "of the Penal Code? Do you not know that youbear on your persons the emblems of revolt, and that were I to act strictly, according to the right that is vested in me, I might order you to be arrested?" To this the others replied, "We regret appearing before your royal highness in any way that may appear disrespectful; such is not our intention. These are not the symbols of revolt, but of nationality and patriotism. They have been adopted, Sir, to prevent those of France being hoisted, as, has been already the

* "Jean le Brabançon au bon peuple Belge." Bruxelles, 1831. p.15.

case in many parts of the city, until we ordered them to be removed."

It would be superfluous to detail the conversation that ensued. Neither party would consent to withdraw its pretensions. At length the prince, having summoned the rest of the deputation to his presence, exclaimed,—"Gentlemen, I have already announced to your two colleagues my final resolution. However, in order that there may be no mistake, here is a written copy of my conditions. Communicate them to your fellow-citizens; and God grant," added his royal highness, with much emotion, "that you and they may listen to the voice of reason.—I have done my duty."

Scarcely had the deputation returned to Brussels, ere reports of the demands made by the princes rapidly spread through the city, where they produced an extraordinary degree of fermentation. Shouts of "To arms! Let us repulse force by force; long live our colours! and down with the Dutch!" resounded from every quarter. Imitating the example of the Parisians, the populace commenced digging retrenchments, tearing up the pavements and converting them into barricades. The trees on the Boulevards were felled, and stockades and chevaux-de-frise erected with their trunks. Carts, waggons, diligences, and carriages were seized and dragged across the streets, strengthened with tubs, ladders, and beams of timber. The gates, as well as all the issues of the town, were intrenched and blocked up, so as to prevent all egress or ingress. Stones and other missiles were conveyed to the summit of the houses and placed on the window-sills; and in parts of the city, females were seen actively employed in aiding the defensive operations. In short, such was the enthusiasm displayed by the population, that in a few hours the once calm and beautiful streets were torn up and intersected

with barricades and trenches, and the whole assumed the fearful aspect of a beleaguered city swarming with armed men.

Amidst the rattling of drums, the roars of the multitude, and the running to and fro of women and children, it was not a little striking to observe the regularity and steadiness of the armed citizens, who already moved with a degree of precision and military firmness that presaged well for the cause they had sworn to defend. On observing their martial appearance and resolute countenance at that moment, it was not easy to divine that, in less than a year after, the "*blouse*" should become the ridicule of all Europe; and that those soldier-citizens, after casting out the Dutch with ignominy from their city, should have been dispersed by the vanquished like chaff before the wind.

In the meantime, a council having been held at the town-hall, it was resolved to announce the result of the mission to Vilvorde by proclamation, as well as the determination adopted to dispatch a second deputation to that place, in order to gain some modifications to the proposed conditions, which were unanimously declared to be of a nature that precluded all possibility of negotiation.

The proclamation being read to the people from the balcony of the town-hall, that part alluding to the demanded removal of the national colours and entry of the troops produced the loudest outcries, and copies having been communicated to the different sections, they redoubled the activity of the people in throwing up barricades and strengthening their defensive preparations. A large supply of cartridges were made and distributed, the cannon abandoned by the king's troops were made ready, and it was evident either that the prince must consent to withdraw his demands, or that immediate civil war was inevitable.

During the sitting of the council, it was proposed that the Spanish and Austrian ambassadors, who with others of the diplomatic corps still remained in Brussels, should be requested to employ their official intervention with the princes; but M. Van de Weyer and Count Duval de Beaulieu having energetically opposed this measure, it was agreed, after considerable discussion, that the offer of these two diplomatists, to employ their voluntary and private good offices, should be accepted.

On the arrival of the second deputation, composed of the Prince de Ligne, Count Duval de Beaulieu, Baron Van der Smissen, and three others, they were ushered, after a short delay, into the presence of the princes, whom they found standing near a table placed near the centre of the room, whilst Lieutenant-general Constant and the rest of their suite were ranged behind them, in a manner evidently intended to impose. After a short pause, there arose a most animated discussion, during which their royal highnesses evinced little disposition to accede to the demands of the citizens, and indeed insisted, as a *sine quâ non*, upon the removal of the Brabant tri-colour, which they unhesitatingly stigmatized as an emblem of rebellion. And by what other epithet could it be designated?

It might, perhaps, have been adopted, in the first instance, to prevent the general assumption of that of France; but it was an absurd sophism to pretend that the substitution of a local colour in lieu of that recognized by law, was a mere proof of patriotism, and not a demonstration of sedition. The Orange cockade might have been the emblem of a family, but it had hitherto been acknowledged as that of the monarchy, and, together with the Dutch tri-colour, was the only standard recognized by foreign powers. Either from conviction of the truth of this fact, or from motives of courtesy,

the members of the deputation, on appearing before the princes, removed or concealed the obnoxious ribbons; a concession not extremely judicious, since it was tantamount to an admission of its illegality. But their object was not to contest a point of etiquette, but to obtain the adherence of the princes to the demands of their fellow-citizens, without which all further negotiation would have been impracticable.

The questions of the national colours and entry of the troops was warmly contested on both sides. But finding the deputies equally resolute with themselves, the princes at length hinted at the painful necessity they should be reduced to of employing force, and treating as rebels those whom it was their desire to embrace as friends. Upon this both the Prince de Ligne and Count Duval, whose rank, wealth, and social antecedents certainly guaranteed them from all possible imputation of jacobinism—who might be considered as utterly disinterested, and who had, in fact, given hostages to monarchy and tranquillity—replied in terms of considerable energy.

The latter forcibly expatiated on the danger of driving to desperation a populace already excited to an alarming pitch, and the frightful consequences that might result from commencing a civil war. He gave a glowing description of the state of public feeling, both in the metropolis and provinces, and with prophetic voice declared that the first cannon-shot fired on Brussels would be the signal for a levy of bucklers, and the first citizen's grave the sepulchre of the dynasty.

The Prince de Ligne, a young man hitherto little known save from his noble fortune and the ultra Catholic servility in which he was said to have been educated, conducted himself on this occasion with considerable spirit, but with that courtesy which became his rank.

"If your royal highness persist in attempting to force your way into the city," said he, "the citizens will form barricades with their very bodies. As we issued from the city, they surrounded our carriage, and bade us say that they are resolved to perish rather than submit, and that, before penetrating into the town, the troops must make stepping-stones of their corpses. But I implore your royal highness," added de Ligne, "for your own sake, for that of the princes your sons, to pause ere you draw the sword. Should blood flow, the responsibility will fall on you, and your posterity will look back and point to your name as the destroyer of their heritage." Some haughty and intemperate remarks having been uttered by some of the royal suite, who, with the natural impetuosity of devoted soldiers, were indignant at the frank language of the deputies, Duval turned round, and with a firm voice exclaimed, "Sirs! it was by listening to the voice of such injudicious councillors as you are, that Charles X. lost his crown. Beware how you urge your royal master into a similar abyss!" To this Van der Smissen added, "That he warned them to be more guarded in their expressions, lest they should not only bring destruction on those they served, but severe personal chastisement on themselves."

It is not probable that menaces or intemperate observations would have produced any effect on a man so chivalrously valiant as the Prince of Orange; but as he had been adverse from the first moment to the employment of force, being convinced that conciliation was the surest path to success, and as the deputies eloquently appealed to his humanity, and whilst they spoke firmly, prudently abstained from any further expressions calculated to irritate his susceptibilities, his royal highness gradually relaxed, and tears frequently dimmed his eyes. After retiring to re-consult Mr. Van Gobelschroy,

who had arrived during the deliberation, a sort of compromise was suggested respecting the colours, which appeared calculated to suit both parties. This was, that the burgher-guard should wear both the Orange and Brabant cockade, and that his royal highness should adopt a similar plan on entering the city. After settling this point, and vanquishing other scruples of a personal nature, the prince reappeared, and bade the deputies return home, and announce to their fellow-citizens his determination to sacrifice all individual feelings for the public good, and that he should enter Brussels on the following morning without any other escort than his own staff.*

Rejoiced at the success of their mission, the deputation returned to the city, and by daybreak on the following morning, the 1st of September, a proclamation announced to the inhabitants the result of the Vilvorde conference. An order of the day was issued at the same time, calling on the chiefs of section to muster their battalions, in the square of the town-hall at 10 A. M., "to meet and escort the prince into the city." In the meanwhile, the proposition respecting the Orange colours having been communicated to and accepted by the burgher-guard officers and notables, every effort was made during the night to prepare a sufficient number of these cockades for the whole body, and before the appointed hour, several well-filled baskets were deposited in the town-hall. These were on the point of being distributed, when the arrival of Colonel Cruquenbourg with a message from Vilvorde gave a new turn to affairs; a change having taken place in the plans of the Prince of Orange, who, yielding to the representations of his brother

* Prince Frederick declined separating himself from the troops of which he had been appointed commander.

and General Constant, had resolved to make the question of the removal of the Brabant tri-colour, a *sine quâ non* to his entrance. This officer on seeing himself surrounded by Brabant colours, not only insisted on their immediate removal, but employed such irritating and impetuous language, that it was unanimously resolved by all persons present *not* to adopt the Orange cockade; and after a violent altercation, Colonel Cruquenbourg was desired to return to Vilvorde, and to inform the Prince of Orange that the citizens would sooner perish than reject the one or assume the other.

In the course of two hours, Count Stirum, aide-de-camp to Prince Frederick, arrived on a similar errand; but, though more guarded and courteous in his manner, he was compelled to return without being able to overcome the resolution of the burghers. At length the Prince of Orange, finding that he could obtain no further concession, gave up the contest, and in despite of the advice of his attendants, announced his intention of immediately entering the city.

No time was lost by the armed citizens in obeying the summonses of their chiefs. Before eleven o'clock, the whole corps, amounting to nearly 5,000 men, drew up in the Grande Place. The major part of these were furnished with fire-arms; but the leading section, composed of men from the suburbs, and the company of butchers, had no other weapons than scythes, long knifes, and pike-heads affixed to poles, with here and there a rusty musket, forming altogether a savage and picturesque group.

All preliminary arrangements being concluded, the order to march was given, and the whole body filed through the streets. On reaching the Laaken-gate the two leading sections continued their route along the Antwerp road, until they reached a spot called *La Perche;* but the remainder declared that they would not quit

the city, or expose themselves to be cut off and massacred by the Dutch. They consequently formed themselves into a line, that extended back nearly to the centre of the city, and thus awaited the prince's arrival.

Soon after mid-day, his royal highness was perceived approaching the Laaken-bridge, attended by four officers of his own suite and a small escort of light horse. It was an anxious moment for the prince and those around him; some of whom, up to the last instant, had earnestly implored him to revoke his decision, and not to throw himself into the hands of men whose sole object was to ensnare and retain him as a hostage; for they had received hints that such was the intention of the "rebels." "Besides," added they, "although the chiefs may guarantee your safety, how can they answer for the conduct of a rabble, who within the last few days have given such deplorable evidence of their reckless fury? It requires but one parricidal hand to pull the trigger; and *we*, your royal highness's faithful servants, and not the rebel chiefs, will be held responsible to the king and the nation."

"Fear not," rejoined the prince; "that Providence which has often watched over me in the hour of peril, will not abandon me. That star, which through centuries has shone upon the house of Nassau will not now withdraw its light. I shall enter without mistrust, and implicitly confide on the loyalty of the citizens. They may be rebellious, but they are not cold-blooded assassins. I never wilfully wronged any man. I go there for the general welfare. They will not be ungrateful. The greater the peril, the more eminent the glory; and were I to purchase the restoration of peace by the sacrifice of my life, my fall would not be less honourable than if I met with death on the field of battle."

As H. R. H. approached the bridge, he dismissed his

cavalry escort, and was respectfully received by the staff of the burgher-guards, to whom he addressed himself in an animated and conciliatory manner—the men presenting arms, and the drums beating the salute. As he rode down the line, a silence peculiarly impressive reigned around, for it had been wisely recommended to the burghers not to proffer any cries of loyalty, least this might give rise to opposition and call forth exclamations of an offensive nature. For, although the vast majority were well disposed, it was impossible to answer for the whole, and still less for the vast multitude of idle spectators that lined the roads and filled the adjoining plains.

Upon reaching the Laaken-gate, and perceiving the dense masses of armed men that filled the streets, a momentary paleness overspread the prince's countenance, and he betrayed symptoms of deep emotion, not unmingled with distrust. After a moment's pause, he turned to the persons near him, and expressed a desire to ascend the boulevards, and thus to proceed to his palace by the *rue Royale*. But this was objected to, because the line of burghers was drawn up in the direction of the theatre, and they, as well as the population, awaited his passage. Looking round, and finding himself completely in the power of the surrounding masses, H. R. H. suppressed his own feelings, and merely saying to Van der Smissen, Duval, Plaisant, and others who walked by his side, "Gentlemen, I confide in you!" he assented with a smile to their demands.

This proceeding on the part of the people was not without its object; fears being entertained by them, that if the prince was permitted to ascend the boulevards, that he would put spurs to his horse, and thus gain the palace, where the royal troops had been concentrated, before they could even reach the centre of the city. They well knew his ardour and intrepidity, and appre-

hended that he might harangue the soldiers, animate them by his example, and commence offensive operations within the walls, whilst the troops from Vilvorde and Assche, should advance on the Flanders and Schaerbeck-gates, and thus, taking the citizens between two fires, force them to submission or flight. It must be borne in mind, that at this time there was not the slightest symptom of disaffection amongst the military; officers and men were prepared and anxious to do their duty, until the subsequent repulse from Brussels demoralized and disheartened the whole of the troops, both Dutch and Belgians.

Upon penetrating farther into the city, the prince was evidently astounded at the formidable preparations made to oppose any forcible entry. The streets, especially where they opened on the boulevards, were intersected with deep trenches, barricades, and chevaux-de-frise; so as to render it nearly impossible to pass from one to the other without clambering over various obstacles, or passing through narrow intervals that scarcely admitted the passage of a horse. These defensive works, the result of one night's labour, showed what might be done were a longer time allowed for preparation. They were proofs of the danger of attempting to penetrate into a city thus fortified, especially with cavalry. The lesson was, however, thrown away.

As the cavalcade advanced, the same silence was maintained. There were no greetings, no hurrahs! no symptoms of loyalty or devotion. There was a buzzing hum, a rushing to and fro, but no acclamations. No flowers were strewed in the streets, no handkerchiefs waved from the windows. Every eye, every countenance seemed to frown upon him.

——————"No man cried 'God save him!'
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home."

Although his clenched jaw and expanded nostril more than once bespoke the intensity of his feeling, and a momentary tear did glitter in his eye, he suppressed the emotions of his heart; and maintaining a gallant bearing, stopped here and there to address persons of his acquaintance,—praising some for their good conduct, and assuring others that, if it depended on his exertions, their grievances should be speedily redressed.

On reaching the *Marché aux herbes*, his royal highness expressed a desire to proceed direct to his palace; but, independent of the immense crowds that filled the *rue de la Madelaine*, impassible barricades completely barred the passage. As some discussion took place as to the route to be followed, the populace became extremely clamorous, and with loud shouts exclaimed—"To the Palace of the People!—to the Hôtel de Ville!" whilst an athletic and fierce-looking man, armed with a pike, sprung forward, and brandishing his weapon above the head of the prince's horse, roared out—"*Vive la liberté!*—to the town-hall!" Turning to M. Plaisant, who stood at the prince's stirrup, his royal highness exclaimed—"Cursed liberty, that will not allow a man to go direct to his own house!" The multitude now becoming still more clamorous, and the persons near the prince feeling anxious for their illustrious charge, M. Plaisant whispered to him—"Quicken your pace, Sir, in God's name; it will be more prudent to proceed to the town-hall."

Upon reaching the front of this building, on the perystile of which the regency was assembled, the prince reined in his horse, and the immense crowd having formed a circle around him, he harangued them in a strain of deep feeling and moderation. He appealed to their loyalty and love of order, and promised to devote

himself to their welfare. He told them, although there was no occasion for arming, the troops being come as brethren and not as enemies, that he himself, as colonel-general of the communal guards, was glad to see himself surrounded by the armed citizens. On concluding, he raised his hat, and shouted "*Vive le Roi!*" But these talismanic words, so effective in ordinary times, had lost their charm. They were either feebly re-echoed, or drowned by vociferous shouts of "*Vive la Liberté! A bas Van Maanen!*" whilst even the more popular cry of "*Vive le Prince!*" was accompanied by no enthusiastic marks of devotion.

It was here that an accident occurred that might have led to most unpleasant consequences. The horse rode by the prince, a beautiful but vicious animal, became frightened and irritated by the pressure of the crowd on his flanks. It had already bitten more than one person, and had kicked Baron Van der Smissen so severely, as to disable him from further duty. An individual having incautiously placed his hand on the fiery creature's crupper, it instantly lashed out, and struck him so severely as to awaken apprehensions for his life.

The populace, concluding the man to have been killed, broke forth into loud vociferations. Some cried, "bayonet the vicious brute! Alight! alight! and walk with us;" whilst others roared out, "On foot, on foot! we are not made to be trampled beneath Dutch hoofs." In the meanwhile, the prince called to his groom, sprung from the animal he rode to the back of that of his attendant, and said, "if the man is injured I will give him a pension of 500 florins; the horse shall be destroyed." But from the menacing attitude of the crowd, or from some sudden impulse, his royal highness had scarcely uttered these words, ere he put his horse into a trot, and having reached the narrow street leading from the Grande

Place to the Palace of Justice, broke into a gallop, followed by his staff and a few mounted burghers.

His progress was not unattended with peril. Being compelled to urge his charger over one of the barricades, neither his personal attendants or escort could follow, so that he arrived suddenly and alone in the square of the Palace of Justice. Here, from ignorance or malice, an armed burgher rushed at him with fixed bayonet, and the consequence might have been fatal, had not another citizen sprung forward and turned the weapon. Loud and insulting language was now uttered by some of the bystanding rabble; but being joined at length by his suite, and an opening being made in the barricades that barred every issue, the prince proceeded rapidly to his palace, where he arrived in no ordinary state of excitement and displeasure at what had passed.

Instantly turning round to the citizens that had followed him, he rebuked them in bitter terms for thus permitting him to be insulted. "As for you, Sir," said his royal highness to D'Hoogvorst, "you shall answer for this on your head. Are these your promises? Was it for this that you entrapped me, the son of your king, into your city? Is this your Belgic faith?" The persons present, who were deeply distressed at what had occurred, now stepped forward, and after a short but animated discussion, succeeded in appeasing the prince's wrath, so that he soon recovered his wonted equanimity of temper, and having summoned to his presence several of the most influential citizens, immediately proceeded to hold a conference, as to the best measures to be adopted for the restoration of tranquillity. In the course of the afternoon, a proclamation announced to the inhabitants the selection of a commission, charged with proposing measures for the re-establishment of a good understanding between the government and citizens;

thanking the latter for their laudable conduct, and assuring them that no troops should enter the city.*

Although some of the persons selected as members of this commission were extremely unpopular, the proclamation produced salutary effects. The night passed off tranquilly, and as the prince had dispatched a courier to the Hague, it was hoped that M. Van Maanen would be dismissed, and that conciliatory measures would be adopted.

If the policy or utility of the prince's entry into Brussels be subject to discussion, there can be but one opinion as to the gallantry and devotion of the abstract fact. Never was there an occasion when greater moral courage was requisite, or, if necessary, where it was more amply manifested. However replete the history of the Nassau family may be with episodes of an interesting nature, none can be recorded more striking, more chivalrous, than this. A situation more painful, more galling, could not well be imagined. There was no stimulus to excite him; all was cold, stagnant, and repulsive. The courage necessary on this occasion was essentially moral. There existed none of the hurried movement, the din, the clash, the feverish tumult of the battle-field, to warm his heart. There was none of the proud feeling that animates a commander at the sight of obedient and well-disciplined columns advancing, retreating, charging, or rallying at his word. There was none of that enthusiastic indescribable ardour that urges on a soldier, on the day of combat, to encounter the most perilous chances, reckless of destruction and opposing numbers.

There was danger without glory, and sacrifice without reward. Although surrounded by armed men, he

* See Appendix, No. 6.

rode powerless amongst them. He was there, alone, in the middle of a revolted population, the royal insignia of his house trampled under foot, the banner of sedition waving above his head, or fluttering in his very teeth. Certain that he was in the midst of foes, he was uncertain whether a single friendly arm would be stretched forth to arrest an assassin's hand, or a single voice be raised to protect him from insult. In lieu of loyal greetings, he was met by the silence of disaffection; and he saw stern defiance and triumph depicted on those very countenances that a short time previous had bent with cringing smiles before him. In short, he appeared in the midst of the populace as a mere trophy intended to swell the pride of the conquerors, or as a hostage for the security of the revolted.

Thus much for the conduct of the prince, which, during the whole of his sojourn in the city, merited the warmest eulogium. His self-possession, frankness, affability, and gallant bearing, drew forth marks of admiration from every generous heart, and even the bitterest enemies of his house and religion united in the tribute of applause. Had the security of the monarchy depended on this act alone, the Netherlands throne had been saved.

As an act of policy, the question must be viewed in a totally different light. Considering the line of conduct the king's government had determined to pursue, it is highly questionable whether the prince acted wisely in yielding to the demands of the people, or whether his entry into Brussels under existing circumstances was not calculated to produce a pernicious reaction at some subsequent period. It was evident to a demonstration, notwithstanding the assertions and protestations of the deputations and press, that the capital was then in an open state of revolt, so nearly allied to flagrant revolu-

tion, that only one of two alternatives remained to be adopted. That is, the development of force with all its terrible accompaniments of bloodshed, civil war, prisons and scaffolds; or open, undisguised concession, with unreserved pardon and oblivion.

There could be no medium. It was evident that the government must yield to the people, or the people to the government; for the leaders of the people, those who had assumed the reins of power, had gone too far to retract. The penal code was there, and they had no choice between flight and chastisement, unless their safety without retrospect was solemnly guaranteed. Had the government been endowed with greater perspicuity, had it not been too deeply bent on re-establishing its lost preponderance, and too much deceived as to its own power, it would have done wisely to have considered the disgusting scenes of the 25th and 26th as a mere mob riot, and leaving the punishment of the inferior actors to the ordinary tribunals, instantly to have come forward, and satisfied the demands of more dangerous and puissant enemies.

If it was resolved to deny concession, and to trust the final arrangement to the "*ultima ratio regum*," half measures were futile. It was as absurd in Prince Frederick to draw the sword until the arm intended to wield it was firmly braced, as it was impolitic for the Prince of Orange to hold forth promises, without having the power to realize them. The true position of the case may be resumed in a few words.

The hatred to the Dutch was so intense, that the desire for separation, which had lurked in some men's minds, was becoming rapidly contagious. There was, however, no absolute hostility to the king further than that which arose from his being the representative of the Dutch monopoly. Had this system been modified,

and the balance restored between the two countries, all individual disloyalty would have vanished. For the exaggerated animosity of some few ultra-liberals and ultra-Catholics must not be confounded with the general voice of the nation.

Subsequent events have proved that the disaffection of the Catholico-liberal union was directed against general measures, and not individual creeds; for the very same party now composes that majority which constitutes the firmest support of the present *Protestant* monarch. The whole virus consisted in an utter abhorrence of Dutch supremacy. And herein lays the great distinction between the results of the French and Belgian revolution. From its first eruption, the one was directed against men, for the system of the government can scarcely be said to have been changed with the dynasty; whilst from the first instant that the other assumed a definite form, it may be said to have been levelled against measures. The attack on men was a consequence, not a cause; and a more absolute and radical change does not stand on record, for scarce a vestige of the old edifice remains.

When the Prince of Orange, made up his mind to exceed the letter of his instructions, and in despite of the refusal of his brother and the remonstrances of his suite, resolutely determined to trust himself in the midst of his father's revolted subjects, he should have prepared himself for bold and energetic measures. Knowing, as he must have known, the secret determination of the cabinet, the unbending firmness of the king's character, and the utter hopelessness of inducing him to retract; seeing and hearing that internal war was inevitable, and that in the then state of Europe external aid was improbable, and success consequently extremely problematical; he should have decided on

quitting the city the moment he had given to Europe and the Belgians so striking a proof of his devotion; or he should at once have declared himself for the popular cause, and then exclaimed :—

"Belgians! I will dispatch messengers to the Hague, I will join my prayers and link my destinies with yours. Will you have me for your advocate, your mediator, your chief? If so, I will remain amongst you. I see that you have been misrepresented. You are neither rebels or revolutionists; but men struggling for the redress of oppressive grievances, and those equal rights and liberties that were guaranteed to you by treaty and constitution. Fear not, I will place myself at your head, and will share your fate. If the troops advance against you, my arm shall carve the road to victory, or my blood shall flow with yours. We will live and die together."

Such doctrines may be considered machiavelic and immoral. To preach filial disobedience, or to advocate the rebellion of a son against a father, would be odious in ordinary life, or in ordinary times; but when thrones are at stake, when an act of this nature may save a monarchy, all other considerations ought to give way. Without some such decisive act as this, the dynasty was irrevocably lost; with it, it might have been saved—saved, even without the necessity of a rupture between the father and son. For had the father been politic, he would have yielded to the demands of the son, then become the organ of the people. He might have appointed him his viceroy and have thus conciliated policy and reciprocal duty.

This was, perhaps, the only way of securing for one branch that which was likely to be lost to the main stem. Had the Prince of Orange boldly adopted this plan, had the British government urged him to do so,

the whole tide of popularity would have turned in his favour; he would have been raised on the bucklers of the people to the very clouds; hearts and hands would have gone with him, and by making himself the firm but respectful interpreter of national demands, by remaining with them until those demands were granted, he would probably have obtained for the Belgians all they wanted, without further anarchy or bloodshed, and would have secured for his dynasty that brilliant jewel, which has now irrevocably passed into other hands. Severe moralists would, perhaps, have raised outcries against such an act of filial disobedience. But Europe, which was eager to see Belgium preserved to the Nassaus, would have applauded a stroke of policy that would have settled the question without the necessity of foreign intervention. Providing there was no absolute restoration, France cared little whether the crown were placed on the head of a Nassau or of any other prince.

But that filial piety, that profound deference for his father, and that chivalrous sense of honour, for which the Prince of Orange is not less distinguished than for his personal courage, entirely prevailed, and the golden opportunity was lost for ever. The favourable impression made on the public mind by his proceedings on the 1st of September was utterly effaced amidst the subsequent carnage and conflagration.

CHAPTER XI.

CONDUCT OF THE DUTCH GENERALS COMMANDING THE PROVINCES —RIOTS AT VERVIERS, AND STATE OF FERMENTATION IN THE TOWNS—THE DEPUTATION RETURNS FROM THE HAGUE—THEIR REPORT—EXCITEMENT CREATED BY IT AT BRUSSELS—CALMED BY THE INTERFERENCE OF M. VAN DE WEYER—INTERVIEW OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE WITH MESSRS. GENDEBIEN, DE BROUCKERE, AND OTHERS—AUDIENCE GIVEN BY THE PRINCE TO THE COMMISSION AND CITIZENS—DIALOGUE AND INERESTING SCENE THAT TOOK PLACE—HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS ISSUES A PROCLAMATION, QUITS THE CITY, AND WITHDRAWS THE TROOPS—BRUSSELS DELIVERED OVER TO THE BURGHER-GUARD.

WHILST these events were passing in the metropolis, some of the commanding generals in the provinces took precautions to maintain the public peace, and, in the event of an outbreaking, to preserve the supremacy of the laws. General Van Gheen at Namur, and, above all, General Dibbetz at Maestricht, distinguished themselves by the firmness and ability of their conduct. But in general the measures adopted by the military commanders, were on a par with those of the commandant at Brussels; and wherever disturbances did take place, the troops either remained passive spectators, or were employed in such manner as insured defeat.

The demoralizing effects of the frightful scenes of the capital unfortunately extended to some portions of the provinces, where excesses of the vilest kind were committed, not apparently from any political motive, but from a sheer spirit of wantonness and revenge. The wealthy manufacturing town of Verviers, stretching over a large extent of hill and dale, unprovided with any garrison or sufficient local force, was a prey, during two or three days, to the greatest disorders. The la

bouring classes, animated with a reckless spirit of destruction, congregated in immense multitudes, and with the most frightful vociferations and cries of "*liberty*," committed the foulest acts of outrage. The houses of the collectors and receivers of taxes, and that of a wealthy notary, were plundered and devastated. The royal and municipal insignia were torn down, and the French tri-colour raised in their place. Several factories were broken open and the machinery destroyed. In short, until the more respectable citizens recovered from their first panic, and, having formed a committee of public safety, convoked the urban-guard, the finest establishments in the beautiful valley of the Vesdre and neighbouring uplands were menaced with destruction.

Although no positive acts of violence were committed at Liege, the revolutionary spirit was of a more definite and determined character. Its bold and adventurous inhabitants, many of whom sighed for a union with France, were prepared for the worst extremes, and no way belied that turbulent reputation which had been their characteristics during so many ages. More than once the splendid establishment at Seraing, a moiety of which was said to belong to the king, was threatened with destruction; nor would the unbounded charity and excellent character of its proprietor have saved it from destruction, had not the numerous workmen come forward and sworn to defend him to the last drop of their blood.*

At Bruges also, where, amidst a population of 39,000 souls, a large portion was composed of persons in a state of great misery, the utmost fermentation existed. Disgraceful outrages were there committed under the eyes of the military, and yet not a man moved. The prin-

* The whole establishment of Seraing was carried on under the firm of Mr. John Cockerill. It is situated on the right bank of the Meuse, and occupies the site of the abbey immortalized by Sir W. Scott, in his "Quentin Durward."

cipal victim in this instance was M. Sandelin, president of the civil tribunal, and a member of the States-General, who had rendered himself obnoxious to his countrymen by his servility to the government, and for having, with few exceptions, supported all the most oppressive measures attributed to M. Van Maanen: his house was consequently pillaged, and burned to the foundation.

With the melancholy exception of Bruges, the remainder of the Flanders continued perfectly tranquil; a circumstance the more remarkable, when it is remembered that these two provinces were the first focus of the petitionary system, and that the influence of the union was greater there than perhaps in any other part of Belgium. The extensive and populous city of Ghent distinguished itself by its peaceable conduct; indeed its wealthy citizens and laborious population, who had shared more largely than any others in Belgium the favours of government, showed little sympathy for the proceedings of the Brussellers. This conduct excited no little jealousy and apprehension on the part of the latter; a jealousy increased by the injudicious violence of the Ghent journal, which had recommended the king to abandon the ungrateful metropolis, and to fix the seat of his court and government in the loyal capital of the Flanders.

Antwerp also preserved its calm. A slight movement had taken place, but it was instantly repressed. In a commercial city, whose whole welfare depended on tranquillity, whose merchants had risen to an admirable state of prosperity under the Netherlands government, and whose population had constant occupation and never-failing bread, disorder and anarchy were anticipated with horror. Consequently, the vast mass of its respectable inhabitants were eager to support the government, and maintain the supremacy of the laws.

In the meanwhile, though Liege, Mons, Namur, Ath,

Grammont, and other principal cities and towns continued free from absolute disorder, the fermentation and moral excitement was not less violent, and indeed of a more decidedly political character. Addresses similar in substance to those of Liege and Brussels were drawn up, and deputations selected to convey them to the foot of the throne. All united in demanding the same concessions, all unanimously called for the dismissal of Van Maanen; but though the language of some was more energetic than that of others, all expressed themselves with loyalty to the king, and implored him, as the arbiter of his own and their destinies, to step forward, and by timely concession to cement the bond that ought to link the people with the crown.

"Sire," said one of the most immoderate of these documents, in its concluding paragraph, "the king who rejoices to call us his countrymen will know how to appreciate the frankness of our language, and will, doubtless, take measures to allay this fermentation which threatens to divide him from his people. If this be done, he will soon see them happy and contented, rallying around his throne."

The deputation dispatched to the Hague having returned to Brussels on the night of the 1st of September, immediate measures were adopted to make known the result of their mission. A report, signed by the deputies was, therefore, drawn up and published; but from motives of prudence, and from apprehension of dangerous consequences, it was determined to soften down the stern and unflinching language of the sovereign, and to give to his replies a greater air of conciliation and moderation than their actual tenor or the severity of his manner justly admitted.

This document is of deep interest. It may be said to contain the protocol of his majesty's subsequent conduct, and to have formed the basis of all his future

operations. In it may be found the germs of all that was then projected and tenaciously adhered to at a later period. It was the prelude to that system of policy which has been acted upon to the present moment. It foretold that plan of procrastinating temporization and unseasonable energy that led to the loss of the Belgic sovereignty. It gave rise to surmises that the king was inclined to consider the question as one of dynasty and not of nationality, and thus to sacrifice the general interests of Belgium and Holland to those of his own family.

It is true, that it is stamped with an air of constitutionality and moderation, allied with dignified firmness, which under other auspices, or at an earlier period, might have produced the most beneficial results. But in the then state of disaffection and ferment, it was calculated to augment rather than allay popular irritation. Such, indeed, was the result; for it was declared to be vague and indefinite in some points, peremptory and unbending in others. It held out prospects and hopes, but no certainty of concession, whilst it unequivocally declared that submission on the part of the people must be the forerunner of conciliation on that of the monarch.

It talked of referring the points at issue to the national representatives, as the only constitutional arbiters, without whose sanction no modification could be effected in the fundamental law. But the malcontents replied—"The government has repeatedly infringed our liberties and trenched on the constitution by the medium of *arrêtés*, emanating from the crown, without any ministerial countersign; let it restore our rights by the same summary process. Are arbitrary acts never to be indulged in, but for evil purposes? Is the king's prerogative never to be employed in acts of grace? Why procrastinate? Let what is to be done, be done quickly; our patience is exhausted."

No one will attempt to assert that there was not

infinite justice and good sense in the royal arguments, but at such a moment, in the midst of such a crisis, their justice is no evidence of their policy. "There are moments," says Montesquieu, "when it may be necessary for government to cast a shroud over the statue of Liberty;" and this might have been advisable had the government been convinced of being able to maintain its supremacy. But on this occasion, it would have been more prudent to have unveiled the goddess completely, and to have acted as did Lords Grey and Durham at a later period, when they even went beyond the demands of the people in some clauses of the Reform Bill. The king was either flagrantly deceived, or he must have known that the population, not only of the capital, but the provinces, were irritated, impatient, ripe for the worst extremes, and armed to the teeth; that Brussels was in the power of the citizens, who had triumphed over the physical supremacy of government, and had vanquished the moral resistance of the heir to the crown; that the royal authority lay prostrate at the feet of the people, or was rendered utterly null by the incapacity and pusillanimity of the generals and civil functionaries.

His majesty's knowledge of human nature and his conversancy with the history of popular revolutions, ought to have warned him of the danger of procrastination. They must have convinced him, that temporization or delay would inevitably add fuel to that fire, which threatened to envelop the whole of the southern provinces in one resistless flame, if it were not instantly quenched by force, or the removal of the combustible matter; in fine, he ought to have seen that the people, wound up to the extremest pitch of discontent and excitement, would brook no longer delay. If he was deceived as to the internal condition of Belgium, the fearful responsibility must rest with his ministers.

If it were his own act, the loss of a splendid kingdom is but a poor retribution. If he relied on support from abroad, he committed a grievous error. France and England were adverse to war, and if they coalesced for the maintenance of peace, what power in Europe would dare draw the sword. But let the most important passages of the report speak for themselves.

"Having arrived at the Hague at one o'clock, on Monday (30th August)," says this document, "we demanded an audience of his majesty, and before half an hour had elapsed, we received a favourable reply. At mid-day, on Tuesday, we repaired to the palace, and were courteously received by the king, who demanded our letters of credence, and did not reject the powers in virtue of which we appeared before him.

"After listening to our written instruction, his majesty observed that he was gratified in having been able to anticipate our wishes, by having convoked the States-General for the 13th of September, which was the only legal and certain method of ascertaining and satisfying the vows of all parts of the kingdom; of doing justice to our grievances, and of adopting means to redress them.

"After a few general considerations, we laid before his majesty and discussed the different points which your council of the 28th had charged us to communicate verbally.

"An argument then arose respecting the theory of ministerial responsibility, and the countersign (*contre-seign*). The king observed that our theories were at variance with the constitution; that they might be just, and perhaps useful; but that they could only be effected by a change in the fundamental law, and by the concurrence of the States-General, convoked in double numbers;* that, an extraordinary session being convened

* Loi fondamentale. Art. 229, 230, 231.

for the 13th, these propositions, as well as all other matter deemed beneficial to the country, might then be discussed.

"As relates to the demand for the dismissal of some ministers, and particularly M. Van Maanen, his majesty said nothing favourable. He neither manifested ill-humour, nor attempted to refute the numerous complaints that we urged against them. He merely observed, that the fundamental law empowered him to select his ministers, and that he could come to no determination on this subject, so long as he seemed to labour under restraint; that he prized too dearly the honour of the royal dignity, even to appear to yield, like a man of whom a favour is asked with a pistol to his throat; but he admitted, both to us and the Liege deputation (received at the same moment), that he *might* take our demand into consideration.

"As regarded the supreme court, his majesty said, that it was not without mature consideration that the place of its establishment had been selected; but that he would pay attention to this intimation, and consider the means of conciliating all parties. His majesty appeared afflicted at our observations respecting the partial distribution of employments, as well as our remonstrances touching the public establishments. Without contesting the validity of facts, he said that it was extremely difficult to divide the administration, and still more difficult to please every one; but that he would consider the subject as soon as tranquillity should be restored; he, however, declared it to be an absolute preliminary that the princes, his sons, should enter Brussels at the head of the troops, and thus terminate that apparent state of obsession, to which he could not yield without giving a pernicious example to other towns of the kingdom.

"After our arguing at some length on the impolicy

and disastrous consequences of any forcible attempt on the part of the troops to enter the city, and the advantages of a convention or proclamation, stipulating that a part of the guards and posts might be occupied by the burgher-guards, his majesty expressed his earnest hope that everything would be quickly settled, and repeatedly assured us, with deep emotion, of his horror at the idea of any effusion of blood."

The effervescence produced by the publication of this report quickly spread through all parts of the city, and threatened the most serious consequences. The anger of the populace was augmented by a malicious and ungrounded rumour, that a bridge had been thrown across the ditch behind the prince's palace, and that the troops from Vilvorde and Assche were advancing, and only waited until nightfall to dash into the city, and to put the populace to the sword. Immense crowds consequently assembled before the Hôtel de Ville, and lined the adjacent streets; whilst a numerous and riotous band, with loud vociferations of, "*down with the traitors! down with the Dutch!*" surrounded the prince's palace, where the members of the commission and other persons were at table.

The noise and purport of the rioters quickly reached the ears of the guests, and created considerable apprehensions lest an attack should be made on the palace. There were significative looks, whisperings, and more than one countenance that was blanched with terror; for the whole party dreaded being enveloped in the same proscription. Fortunately, M. Van de Weyer retained full possession of his presence of mind; rising from his seat, and demanding the prince's permission to quit the room, he assured him that he would answer for the immediate restoration of tranquillity; then requesting General d'Hoogvorst to accompany him, these two popular persons proceeded to the great square, where

the former harangued the multitude in terms calculated to produce the best effect. He explained the real object of the commission assembled at the prince's palace, expounded favourably those parts of the report that had given the greatest offence, ridiculed the idea of a bridge being constructed, and offered to accompany a deputation of their own selection to verify the latter fact. But the effect of his words were nearly defeated by the exertions of several agitators in the crowd; amongst the most conspicuous of whom was a foreigner, apparently a German: but Van de Weyer having seized this man by the collar, and rebuked the crowd for paying more attention to a stranger, "a Dutch spy perhaps!" than one of their own countrymen, whom they knew to be devoted to their cause, the current of popular opinion turned in his favour, and the people gradually dispersed without committing the slightest excess. At the same time, a proclamation was drawn up, and by its prudent language contributed to the maintenance of tranquillity.*

Whilst these events were passing out of doors, some of the prince's suite expressed considerable alarm for his personal safety; so much so, that it was urgently recommended that he should throw himself into the middle of the troops that occupied the royal palace, or furtively quit the city; but this advice was instantly rejected.—"Having once resolved to confide in the good faith of the citizens," said his royal highness, "it would be impolitic, and utterly inconsistent with my honour and dignity, not only to retire before I have accomplished my mission, but even to betray symptoms of distrust. However distressing, I must abide by the consequences. In your anxiety for my safety, you perhaps

* See Appendix, No. 7.

magnify the danger. But, whatever may be the real state of the case, you will do wisely to conceal your apprehensions; we must appear, at least, to place implicit reliance on the loyalty of those around us. The deliberations of the commission will terminate to-morrow, and then we can depart. Come what may, let us say with Francis the First—'All is lost save our honour!'" Thus, when M. Van de Weyer returned to the palace to communicate the result of his efforts, he found the prince terminating his repast, without the slightest symptom of uneasiness.

The sequel proved the groundless nature of the fears that had been expressed on the prince's account; for, although it is indisputable that more than one individual in the prince's palace, and even in his presence, had spoken of him in terms the most coarse and disrespectful, and that it had been positively proposed to retain him as a hostage, the language of the first was repelled with indignation and energy by the person to whom it was addressed; whilst the proposition of the second was stigmatized as a profligate breach of faith, degrading to the national honour. On this, if not on every other occasion, the most efficient means were adopted by the burgher-guard to suppress the slightest attempt at outrage. Nobles, functionaries, and citizens of all classes, united for this laudable purpose. Many of the highest aristocracy were seen serving as simple soldiers, and performing the commonest fatigue duties. It was on this ocasion that the Prince of Orange, issuing from his palace, perceived the Marquess of Chasteler* standing sentry at his gate. "What," said his royal highness, smiling, "your here, marquess!"—"Yes, Sir," replied the other, presenting arms; "when one's

* Afterwards master of the horse to King Leopold.

country is in danger, there ought to be no other distinction amongst its citizens than that of struggling who shall be foremost in its defence."

When unoccupied in discussing the important points submitted to the deliberation of the commission, the prince employed himself either in granting audiences to such persons as were desirous to communicate their opinions, or in walking, almost unattended, through the streets, frankly and affably conversing with all whom chance threw in his way. But if his royal highness had no reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the people towards himself, the language of all those with whom he spoke, the aspect of the city, and the expression that beamed on men's countenances, must have convinced him that all half measures would be utterly inefficacious, and that the only means of preventing an irretrievable rupture was instant concession, or the most prompt and overwhelming development of force. On this subject there could not be a dissentient opinion; even his most devoted partisans, those who have since proved the sincerity of their attachment to his family, all concurred in forcibly expatiating on the dangers of temporization, and the urgent necessity of decided measures.

Indeed, so far were matters carried, so undisguised were the views and intentions of those who might be considered the chiefs of the movement, that, on the evening of the 2d, M. Gendebien waited on the prince, and after having forcibly and energetically developed the actual state of public feeling throughout the capital, he unhesitatingly announced the general desire for a separation between the two countries. Then inviting his royal highness to make common cause with the Belgians, he urged him to place himself at once at the head of the people, and to secure for himself the viceroyalty or crown; the one in case of mere administrative separa-

tion; the other, in that of total rupture; "an event not impossible," added he, "should the king persist in turning a deaf ear to the reclamations of the southern provinces."

But on this occasion every feeling of self-interest and personal aggrandizement gave way to a profound sentiment of filial respect, honourable in the highest extreme to the prince's heart, but most prejudicial to the very interests he sought to protect. Yes! this prince, whose calumniators have asserted that he was an undutiful son, a faithless husband, a bad father, a vile midnight robber—and God knows what else—unhesitatingly rejected an offer that would have then cost him little else than the mere effort of acceptance; an offer that would have suited the views of all Europe, and placed a crown on his head worthy of the ambition of the most illustrious princes.

"No, Sir," exclaimed his royal highness, "it cannot be! you are yourself a father, and renowned for your domestic qualities as a kind parent and dutiful son. What opinion would you entertain of me, were I to sacrifice the interests of *my* father to my own? What confidence could you repose in a man, who could cast off his allegiance to his king, and that king his father, merely to gratify his own ambition? Flattered as I am by your preference, I should be unworthy of the esteem and respect you profess to entertain for me, were I to accept your offer. I also am a father," added his royal highness, with deep emotion, "and am bound to show a proper example to my children. Posterity shall not revert to my name, and revile me as that disloyal Nassau, who tore the diadem from his father's brow to place it on his own."

Such were nearly the terms in which the Prince of Orange declined the rich, the tempting fruit that hung within his grasp; and in this mood he prepared himself

to meet the commission, who had announced their intention of terminating their labours early on the morning of the 3d.

In the forenoon of that memorable day, the last which was destined to see a member of the Orange family within the walls of that palace, which had been raised by the people in commemoration of the brilliant services of its royal proprietor, Mr. Charles de Brouckère, and other members of the States-General, waited upon the prince, confirming, in glowing terms, all those arguments that he had heard from other quarters. At ten, the commission having terminated its labours, and unanimously agreed to the demand for a separation, were ushered into the prince's presence, and through their president, the Duke d'Ursel, formally announced the general wish. But though his royal highness had assisted at their deliberations, he was unable to persuade himself of the unanimity of their desire; and, therefore, in order to satisfy himself more fully on the subject, immediately summoned to his palace all the members of the States-General then in Brussels, the deputies from Liege and other provincial towns, the chiefs of sections, the leading members of the bar—and, in short, all the most influential inhabitants.

No sooner were these persons assembled in the palace, than his royal highness again appeared amongst them, and with considerable emotion, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I have sent for you to request that you will frankly state your opinion on the proposition of the commission. Am I to understand that the general voice tends to an administrative separation?" Scarcely were these words uttered, ere simultaneous shouts of "A separation! a separation!" intermingled with "*Vive le Prince!*" burst from all quarters of the hall,

and were even re-echoed by the crowds outside. As soon as the deafening tumult had somewhat subsided, the prince advanced towards the circle, and after conversing with two or three persons, addressed himself to Major Moyard, commandant of the 7th and 8th sections. Then took place that interesting dialogue, which, though incorrectly given by the journals of the day, made a deep sensation throughout the country.

Having expatiated on the nature of the national grievances, and the difficulty of conciliating the conflicting interests of the two countries, Major Moyard terminated by observing, "There is but one way, Sir, of satisfying all parties, and that is the method proposed by the commission, and re-echoed by us all. Yes, Sir! without an administrative separation, of course under the domination of the king, there is no power that can restore tranquillity. The fire may be quenched for a moment, but the smouldering flame will again burst forth on the first favourable occasion. We may be appeased for awhile, but not satisfied. We may be oppressed, but not conquered. The surface may be healed, but the gangrene will still corrode. It can only be eradicated by absolute amputation!"

These remarks appeared to affect the prince deeply; his whole manner betrayed his agitation. Startled at the boldness and frankness of observations, the full force of which he had not perhaps felt before, he remained awhile in consideration, and then said, "But what do you mean to imply by separation? Explain yourself!"—"Why, Sir," resumed the other, "I mean such a separation as exists between Sweden and Norway —between Austria and Hungary."—"Are you aware, Sir," rejoined the prince, "of the gravity of this demand? Do you not know that the king cannot consent to it, without violating the constitution, and the treaties,

by which he is bound? Do you imagine that the kingdom of the Netherlands was erected for the sole benefit of the House of Orange? (*Pour les beaux yeux de la maison d'Orange.*)—No, Sir, the question is not dynastic, but European; for Europe formed the kingdom for no other purpose than to act as a barrier against French encroachments."—"Sir," retorted the major, "the kingdom will not answer the purpose of a barrier less efficaciously, though French be spoken at Brussels, and Dutch at the Hague, and though Belgium be loyal and contented with a constitution of her own, instead of being dissatisfied and disloyal with a fundamental law, which is contrary to her interests and inclinations, however well it may be suited to those of Holland. Besides, Sir, there is a law which takes precedence of all treaties—the law of necessity; and we, Sir, at the present moment, are subject to its influence." After a few moments' consideration, his royal highness turned to the assembly, and with a firm and audible voice, exclaimed, "In the event of such separation being concluded, are you all prepared to swear fidelity to the dynasty?" Shouts of "Yes! yes!" re-echoed from every side, and these with every appearance of sincerity and enthusiasm. "If the French attempt to throw an army into the country, would you fraternize with them?" was the next question. "No! no!" was the general reply; "we want a separation from Holland, not a union with France."—"If they attack us," exclaimed the prince, whose countenance now sparkled with animation, "should they invade us—will you march with me to repulse them?"—"Yes! yes! we will! we will!" was the universal answer, whilst several voices added, "Yes! not only the French, but all other foreigners who may attempt to interfere in our internal affairs."

A pause again took place; the last phrase appeared to have made great impression on the prince, whilst some of his personal staff, and the Dutch generals present, whispered with each other, and betrayed symptoms of vexation and anger, plainly indicating that they well understood that the phrase had been levelled at them. Having quickly mastered the conflicting sentiments that agitated him, his royal highness advanced closer to the circle, and in a tone of peculiar dignity and feeling, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, you well know that I am not my own master; I am but the first subject of the king. All I can do is to make your demands known to his majesty, and I shall do so with the firm conviction that every thing will be done that depends on him to satisfy your vows. But," added his royal highness, "will you not repeat with me, *Vive le Roi!*"—"Yes! yes!" answered some few voices; but this reply was drowned amidst shouts of "No! no! not until our prayers are heard and our grievances redressed. But *Vive le Prince! Vive la Liberté! Vive la Belgique!* Stay, prince—stay amongst us—be our chief, our king, our father!"

The most lively demonstrations of enthusiasm now burst forth from all sides. There was a general waving of hats and handkerchiefs. Some shook hands, others embraced their neighbours, whilst many burst into tears. The excitement was general, and had reached a pitch impossible to describe. The feeling was contagious, and communicated itself to the prince, who appeared deeply affected. A man more ambitious, more machiavelic—a man who wished to take advantage of the moment, would have sprung forward, and casting aside every other sentiment but self-interest, would have grasped the crown that courted his embrace; but it was otherwise ordained. Recovering himself sud-

denly, by one of those transitions for which he was remakable, the prince's countenance assumed a grave and concentrated character. Placing his hand on his heart, and drawing up his figure with a degree of more than usual dignity, he said, "I thank you for these expressions of good will; but my *first* duty to my sovereign, as his *first* subject, is to shew an example of obedience. My heart, my wishes are with you. I never have, I never shall do any thing to forfeit your good opinion. Be patient, and all will yet go well. In a few days I hope to return as the harbinger of good tidings, and to see you once more happy and contented. Until then," and here his royal highness's voice again faltered, "until then, farewell!"

Then bowing to the crowd, he was about to withdraw, when Moyard, again advancing, said, "Sir, I have yet a prayer to make in the name of many of my fellow-citizens. We have the strongest grounds for apprehending that it is the intention of several intriguing persons to endeavour to excite the populace to assault the troops so soon as your royal highness shall have left us. Let me, therefore, implore you, Sir, to order them to evacuate the city. Their stay here, under existing circumstances, must be utterly useless; nay, even degrading to themselves, cooped up, imprisoned, as they are, within the palace. In the present state of popular excitement, it is important to avoid all cause of irritation. None of us, however well disposed, can answer for the consequences."—"I will consider the question immediately," rejoined the prince; "but will you then all answer for the safety of the palaces."—"On our heads," was the reply. Then putting his hand on the tri-coloured ribbon worn at the officer's button-hole, the prince added, "And are the concessions to be all on my side? Is there to be no reciprocity? When will this be removed?"—"In the name of heaven, Sir!"

answered his interlocutor, "do not trouble yourself with such trifles at the present moment. What is the colour of a ribbon in comparison with the safety of a kingdom? Be convinced, Sir, that unless instant measures are adopted to satisfy Belgium, you risk to lose her altogether."

The prince now retired to his cabinet, dissolved the commission, and after a short deliberation with the general officers, issued orders for the troops to quit the city. The meeting at the same time dispersed, having previously signed the following document, which was countersigned by his royal highness, and published in the form of a proclamation.

"INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS!

"His royal highness the Prince of Orange has offered to proceed immediately to the Hague, in order to present our demands in person to his majesty. He will support them with all his influence, and he has every reason to hope they will be granted. The moment after his departure, the troops will evacuate Brussels. The burgher-guard engages, *on its honour*, not to suffer any change of dynasty, and to protect the town, and, above all, the palaces."

A circumstance occurred, before the departure of the prince, over which a veil of mystery has been cast, that renders it extremely difficult to ascertain the exact truth; but although the subject has not been publicly alluded to, no doubt can be entertained of its authenticity.

M. Van de Weyer, Rouppe, and other persons, being desirous to obtain a last interview with the prince before he quitted the city, were admitted to his presence, and again depicted, in the most forcible and convincing language, the perilous condition of the country. After

re-enumerating the grievances, and stating their conviction that a return to the ancient order of things would be impracticable, they urged his royal highness by the duty he owed himself, his children, his father, and Europe, to impress with most energetic terms upon the king's mind the necessity of consenting to a separation, without which it would be impossible to maintain Belgium for the dynasty. Promptitude and decision were above all declared to be essential; for the popular fermentation, both in the city and provinces, was so great, that little prospect existed of maintaining tranquillity beyond ten days or a fortnight, unless a definitive answer arrived within that period.

To this his royal highness replied, that "Although he was fully alive to the critical nature of the questions at issue, and was willing to admit in *strict confidence* that he coincided with them not only in their general views, but in the paramount necessity for a separation, yet he feared his assertions would have no great weight with his father. His majesty, who seemed very incredulous on these points, would probably suspect the fidelity of his conclusions, accuse him of exaggerating the danger, and perhaps attribute to him ambitious views, which God knew were furthest from his mind." He then added, "that he would certainly not fail to use every argument in his power; but however forcible the language of his own conviction might be, he questioned its success, unless he was furnished with some document which would prove that no self-interested motives actuated his conduct; that the picture he should draw was not over-coloured, and that, in advocating a separation, he did but yield to the overwhelming force of circumstances. Of course he should desire such document to be strictly *secret* and *confidential*, and that the persons affixing their names to it should bind themselves

on honour not to divulge its contents." A discussion then arose, not only as to the powers of any persons present to draw up or sign such document without consulting the general voice, but as to its form and tenor. These objections, however, were overruled, and a paper was drawn up, which, from its wording and context, may be considered as little more than an attestation of the good conduct and intimate knowledge of the real state of affairs displayed by the prince during his residence in the city, and the perfect conformity of his opinions with those of the Belgian people.

The solemn promise of secrecy that binds the persons signing this document, precludes the possibility of publishing a copy; but that such a document exists, there can be no doubt. The history of revolutions scarcely furnishes a more singular paradox than that of the heir to the crown being under the necessity of applying to his father's revolted subjects, in order to obtain a certificate that might enable him to gain greater credence with that father, and exculpate him from all sinister intentions.

In less than an hour after this curious scene had passed, his royal highness mounted his horse, and returned to Vilvorde, escorted as far as Laaken by a detachment of burgher cavalry. In a short time he was followed by the troops, and Brussels was abandoned to the care of the citizens. Thus terminated this remarkable occurrence, which forms one of the most interesting passages in the history of the house of Nassau. Two proclamations announced the result of the day's operations to the people, and the most strenuous measures were adopted to complete the organization of the burgher-guard, and to maintain the tranquillity of the city.*

* See Appendix, Nos. 8 and 9.

While all persons agree in bestowing unreserved praise on the manly devotion of the Prince of Orange during these memorable days, it is difficult to understand how he could permit himself to be drawn into a conversation such as has been cited; and still more so, how he could be induced to subjoin his signature to the proclamations issued on the day of his departure.

Having consented to enter the city and to listen to the grievances of the people, it was politic to offer to become their interpreter and mediator as far as regarded these grievances. But in promising to support their demands for a separation, the prince acted in contradiction to his avowed principles, and placed himself in direct opposition both to the fundamental law and the king, to whose opinions he was bound to pay undeviating respect, unless he was prepared to throw aside all scruples, and cast himself into the arms of the people. As it was, he certainly went too far for the reputed interests of the king, and not far enough for his own.

The question submitted by him to the assembly, could only lead to painful conclusions; the groups before him, if not in an absolute state of revolution, were in overt, armed revolt against the government, whose authority they had set at defiance, and against the dynasty, whose insignia they had trampled under foot. To call the Brabant ribbon a mere "rallying sign," when that of the Orange family was proscribed; to profess loyalty whilst the royal ensigns were torn down, and the ordinary homage refused to the king's name; to disclaim revolution, when the royal troops commanded by the king's son were forbidden to enter the city, and those within were in danger of being assaulted by the populace, who held them prisoners; in short, to attempt to argue that the movement had not assumed a definite revolutionary character, is a sophism

that might have answered the views of the moment, but cannot blind posterity. Besides, where was the object of denying the revolution? If it was not revolution, it was mere revolt, and then the king would have been justified in pursuing to the uttermost his system of exacting submission as the antecedent to concession.

Any affirmative replies to questions respecting the dynasty or France, could neither be binding or conclusive. The persons summoned to the palace had no individual or collective authority beyond that which they derived from the strength of revolt. Their mission was not only illegal on that ground, but, with the exception of M. Charles de Brouckère and a few of the members of the States-General, they were for the most part self-elected arbiters, unauthorized to act as organs or interpreters of national sentiments. If the prince suspected them of disloyalty to his dynasty, or of any latent intention of throwing themselves into the arms of France, it would have been more politic to have concealed his suspicions; especially at a moment when they professed not to be actuated by revolutionary intentions. It is evident, that if no benefit could be derived from affirmative answers, much mischief might have arisen from replies of an opposite character. No alternative would have been then left him, but to declare to their teeth that he looked on them as rebels and traitors, and thus to place himself in a state of open hostility to the whole nation.

In lieu of these questions, it would have been more prudent had he confined himself to a patient investigation of their grievances, and to a simple hearing of their demand for separation, and then to have addressed them in some such terms as these:—"Gentlemen, the grievances you have laid before me are well-founded. It is important that they should be redressed without

delay. Although no one can contest the king's indubitable and constitutional right to select his own ministers, he will not, I am sure, oppose your wishes on that score. I will exert all my influence to obtain the relief you seek; but the question of separation is not of my competence. The States-General can alone take cognizance of a matter that tends directly to subvert that fundamental law, of which you yourselves demand the strict execution. A neighbouring monarch was hurled from his throne for having violated the charter? Is it just that you should urge your king to follow an example that might merit for him a similar fate? You have surely too much consideration for my position, to desire me to be the bearer of a demand, which, however just or well-founded your conclusions, I cannot support without violating my duty as a son and subject.

"By my consent to appear amongst you—by the manner in which I have suppressed my own feelings in favour of your wishes—by my earnest attention to your opinions, individual and collective, I have afforded the strongest proofs of my solicitude for your welfare—of my earnest desire to co-operate in the restoration of order, as well as my perfect confidence in your loyalty and good faith. Whatever may be the result, you will, I am sure, rally round the dynasty, and unite with me in repelling any aggression on the part of France. Should the enemies of European peace urge the government of that country to interrupt the harmony now existing between her and other European states, you will, I am sure, prove yourselves worthy of your ancestors, and follow my banner to the field of honour. It will not be the first time, my friends, that I have led you to victory.

"I will meet your wishes as regards the retreat of the troops, and shall quit you with undiminished confidence

in your lovalty, but with increased regret that my efforts to restore tranquillity have not produced those immediate results that I so ardently desire."

Although the sequel has proved that language of this nature might have been inefficacious, it would have been less impolitic than that actually attributed to the prince, which served but to increase the confidence of the people in their own strength, and to diminish that which they entertained for the heir to the throne. For he had to deal with men who made up for their political inexperience by no ordinary degree of tact and cunning. If they could not gain him as an absolute leader, or confederate, they artfully determined to employ him as an accessory, and in this they partly succeeded. But, if the questions propounded to the meeting at the palace were impolitic, how much more imprudent was it in his royal highness to sign a proclamation containing such a sentence as the following: "the burgher guard engages upon its *honour* not to *suffer* any change of dynasty!"

In the difficult and hazardous position in which he was placed—alone, in the heart of a revolted city, without councillors, and surrounded by men on whom he could place no reliance—he might have been drawn into a fruitless discussion. But, to set his seal to such a paper, was a direct acknowledgment of the weakness of the royal authority, as well as the omnipotence of those opposed to it, which, if he could not control, he ought not to have sanctioned. For what construction could be placed on the word "*suffer*," but that the dynasty existed by mere *sufferance*, and that it was in the power of the people who had risen in arms, in utter violation of the constitution and law, either to *tolerate* or depose the dynasty at their pleasure? What weight, what reliance, could be attached to a promise on "*honour?*" The very word was a mockery of the solemn forms

usually adopted towards chiefs of states. In times of utmost tranquillity, the most loyal subjects are required to enchain their allegiance by *oaths*. It was absurd, therefore, to suppose for one moment, that a people in a state of revolt, and fully acquainted with their own strength, should hold themselves bound by any declaration of fidelity "*on honour*."

The numerical strength of the people will always be employed in civil dissensions to counteract or overwhelm the moral force of government, and, if it be ably directed, must obtain the ascendancy: but, as long as princes possess a vestige of authority, there should be no avowal made by them of their own impuissance. The knowledge of their own force in the people is an admirable barrier against the encroachment of despotism, and ought to demonstrate to sovereigns, how cautious they should be in attempting to infringe the liberties of the subject. But when once monarchs publicly assent to the doctrine, that they merely hold their crowns by the capricious will of the people, it is not only inconsistent with the theory of hereditary sovereignty, and a dangerous recognition of the rights of popular insurrection, but it is tantamount to an incitation to the people to exercise their ejecting or elective power, whenever they may think fit to do so,—no matter how just or unjust the cause.

To deny the numerical or rather physical force of the mass, would be to question the mathematical certainty of two sides of an equilatoral triangle being double its base; but nothing can be more dangerous than to teach the people to solve the problem: its simplicity does but add to the peril. It matters little whether a government be republican or monarchical; its position in regard to the multitude is nearly similar. Destroy its moral influence, and you destroy its whole force. Teach the

people that the strength of the government lays in the nation, and not the force of the nation in the government, and there will be an end to all power. For the moment the illusion of the strength of the latter ceases to exist, it cannot reckon upon an hour's security. Its existence must lay at the mercy of numbers.

The sentence in the proclamation alluded to contained a whole revolutionary apology, an absolute acknowledgment of the utter dependence of the dynasty. It gave the victory to the people, even before the question was put to the issue. For it must be borne in mind that the fact of revolution was sturdily denied up to a much later period; and, beyond the suppression of the Orange cockade, no symptoms of hostilty to any member of the royal family had been manifested, save such as were elicited by the questions or appeals of the prince himself.

CHAPTER XII.

REVOLT AT LOUVAIN—THE PEOPLE ATTACK THE TROOPS, AND DRIVE THEM FROM ITS WALLS—MAJOR GAILLARD ASSASSINATED—GENERAL TRIP ADVANCES ON THE TOWN—IS ORDERED TO RETIRE—RIOTS AT AIX-LA-CHAPELLE—HONOURABLE CONDUCT OF THE CITIZENS—THEY DEFEAT THE POPULACE—SEDITION DISSEMINATED THROUGH THE PROVINCES—WANT OF ENERGY OF THE GENERALS AND GOVERNORS—LIEGE FRATERNIZES WITH THE CAPITAL—M. ROGIER ASSEMBLES A BODY OF VOLUNTEERS AND MARCHES THEM TO BRUSSELS—LASSITUDE OF THE CITIZENS—THEIR DESIRE FOR THE RESTORATION OF TRANQUILITY—THE ROYAL FORCES CLOSE AROUND THE CAPITAL.

THE morning of the prince's departure from Brussels was signalized by an act of violence on the part of the people of Louvain, and a want of self-possession on that of the military, which afforded a striking illustration of the daring excitement of the one, and the incomprehensible pusillanimity that characterized all the operations of the other, from the night of the 25th of August down to the signature of the armistice in November. It is so intimately connected also with that terrible episode, which, at a latter period, created such universal horror throughout Europe, as to merit more than common observation.

Exaggerated reports having gone abroad of the advance of troops from Holland, and their intention not only to disarm but to chastise the burghers, the passions of the people were easily aroused, especially in a

town where the lower orders still retain much of the fierce and turbulent character that distinguished them at an earlier epoch, and where some of the most violent and exaggerated patriots possessed considerable influence.

As usual on all occasions of tumult, groups were seen collecting towards dusk. Ere long these groups united and formed a riotous multitude, who filling the air with yells and vociferations of, "Liberty for ever! death to the Dutch!" rushed towards the town-hall, demanding arms. An idea having gone abroad that a depôt of firelocks was concealed at the barracks, Major Gaillard, the unfortunate Gaillard, commandant of the town came forward, and assured them on his honour that they were mistaken. Not satisfied with this assertion, the mob hastened to the barracks, forced open the gates, and penetrated into the building, where unfortunately they discovered a score or two of unserviceable fire-arms. Without waiting to examine the state of the locks or barrels, the multitude cast themselves on their prize, and with wild shouts of triumph and brutal menaces, swore that they had been betrayed. Emboldened by this success, they instantly demanded that the garrison should lay down its arms and quit the town.

Having but a small force, and this composed for the most part of young recruits, Gaillard deemed it prudent to consent. He, therefore, hastened to the scene of tumult, and assured the people on his honour, that, if they would remain tranquil and not molest his soldiers, he would adopt steps to evacuate the city as soon as the necessary preparations could be made.

But unfortunately, whilst these negociations were going on, some of the most intemperate rioters audaciously rushed on the small barrack guard, and attempted to disarm it; upon which the latter, without waiting for

superior orders, fired on the populace. For an instant a scene of fearful confusion took place. The mob, excited to phrenzy by the sight of one or two of their wounded comrades, fell upon the soldiers, some of whom they overpowered and disarmed, whilst the rest fled across the fields, leaving the populace masters of the whole town.

Gaillard, although completely innocent of having directed the troops to fire, or who, if he had so done, would have been perfectly justified in repelling force by force, was accused of being the author of a "premeditated act of treachery." It was therefore deemed prudent for him to quit the city, and remove with his family to Antwerp. His return at a later period was marked by that frightful tragedy, whose horrid details, even divested of all exaggeration, stand almost unparalleled in the annals of barbarism; a tragedy without example—and, for the honour of Belgium, without imitation. For, although no language can be too energetic to stigmatize that odious crime; although no man can pass through Louvain, without feeling his blood curdle at the idea that its walls contained monsters capable of such inhuman depravity as the cold-blooded murder of that unfortunate man; it is but just to say, that there was scarcely a single heart in the country that did not rise with disgust and indignation, when the fact was published. This horrible act of atrocity, not only stood alone, but created such a sensation, as plainly showed the aversion of the people to crimes of a similar nature.* Indeed, with this accursed exception, the revolution has been bloodless. Not another human being has lost his life, either from popular or judicial persecution. There may have been a thirst for devastation; but, even in the most excited moments,

* Some of the assassins of the unfortunate Gaillard were subsequently brought to trial and condemned to divers punishments.

there was none for blood. The victims that have fallen on either side have been sacrificed to the god of battle, and not to the demon of assassination.

The intelligence of this affair had no sooner reached Prince Frederick's head-quarters, than orders were issued to General Trip to proceed without loss of time, at the head of a battalion of infantry and two squadrons, with four field pieces, to restore order and re-establish the royal authority. No sooner did the advanced vedettes appear on the heights above the town, than the tocsin was sounded, the people flew to arms, barricades were constructed, and an unanimous determination adopted to resist the royal detachment. A deputation was sent by the regency to wait on General Trip, to implore him not to attempt a forcible entry, which could not fail to end in bloodshed. But, the general persisting in the necessity of executing his orders, the negotiations were so long delayed, that the impatience of the populace could not be restrained.

Some of the most excited threw themselves into the fields, and from the cover of the ramparts and hedges, commenced a sharp fire of musketry on the nearest vedettes. General Trip was on the point of making his dispositions to repel this aggression, when a dispatch from the head-quarters ordered him to retire and avoid all collision with the people. Emboldened by the success, the latter pursued the royal troops to some distance, and after expending the whole of their ammunition withdrew to the town, where a commission of public safety was immediately appointed under the presidence of M. Van Maanen. Whatever might have been the conduct of the other cities of the kingdom, Louvain had now completely thrown off the mask and taken the initiative in civil war. But this town was destined to lend its name to more than one of the most fatal and in-

glorious episodes of the period. Providence seemed to have ordered that the assassination of Gaillard should be revenged by the disasters of the following August.

Whilst these events were passing in Belgium, the neighbouring Rhenan provinces were not altogether exempt from trouble. Aix-la-Chapelle, the vast mass of whose population is composed of factory workmen remarkable for their dissolute morals, was for a short time the theatre of grave disorders. The electric spark which ran through all the neighbouring countries, here left most distressing marks of its malignant influence. But the noble devotion of the citizens and police arrested a conflagration that might otherwise have involved the whole country in an awful flame of destruction.

From its vicinity and constant intercourse with Verviers; from its markets being principally supplied by Liege peasantry, and from many of its workmen being from the Wallon districts, rumours of what had passed at Brussels and in the valley of the Vesdre, quickly spread among the population. As the city had no other garrison than a small detachment of the 30th infantry, a dozen gensdarmes, and the staff of the landwher, a few desperate characters laid plans for creating a riot, flattering themselves they should be enabled to glut their appetite for pillage with the same impunity as their Belgian neighbours.

Although the evidence of more than 300 witnesses examined on the trial of the seventy-one wretches inculpated on this occasion, proved that these disturbances had no direct political tendency, yet they could not be considered as altogether divested of a political character. For, if not the immediate result of the fermentation caused by the "July days," they were the direct consequence of the more recent excesses in Brussels and Verviers. Indeed, the first symptoms of com-

motion appeared to have been given by the arrival of the Liege diligence on the 29th, with its postillions and horses decked with French cockades; an event that caused the utmost agitation, and brought the scene of trouble, as it were, to the very doors of the city, and perhaps in some minds excited hopes of similar impunity.

But whatever might have been the indirect cause, the effects were confined to a brutal attack against private individuals and private property. Plunder, massacre, and incendiarism was the purport; freedom, the excuse. The shouts of *vive Napoleon! vive la liberté!* uttered by some of the mob, were mere rallying cries by which the miscreants urged each other on to the work of robbery and devastation.

The actors were all men of the lowest class; the leaders, convicted felons. Not a word was elicited from any witness on the trial of the prisoners to prove that any individual of education was connected with it. No attack was made on any of the public edifices, and the assault on the prison was only undertaken in order to let loose its 290 inmates, amongst whom were several desperate bandits, destined, in case of enlargement, to act as chiefs of a revolt that had more the appearance of one of those terrible exploits of *Schinder Hannes*, than a popular commotion. It is true, cries of *vive les Belges!* were heard, and it was declared that many Wallons had borne an active share in the plunder, and were designated as the leaders of the horde who intended to set fire to the four quarters of the city; that some of these had been wounded and carried across the frontiers, and that a great part of the others disappeared. But admitting that the Wallons did take a prominent share in the tumult—and of this fact there can be no doubt—it is remarkable that of the seventy-one individuals brought to trial, all but two were Prussian subjects—and of these,

one was a *Dutchman* from Amsterdam, and the other a native of Augsbourg. It was proved, on the other hand, that a Belgian officer, who had joined the armed burghers, distinguished himself on this occassion in defence of the laws.

Although the property of several respectable citizens suffered severely, the principal victim was an Englishman, Mr. Charles James Cockerell, brother of the proprietor of Seraing, long domiciled in Prussia, and founder of more than one of those thriving establishments, that are gradually tending to place that country in the highest scale of commercial and industrial prosperity. This gentleman, who is as proverbial through the Aix district for his philanthropy and noble hospitality, as for his wealth and enterprise, had his house completely pillaged.* For, independent of a loss of 135,000 francs in bank-notes, 12,000 in gold, and 3,000 dollars in silver, the value of the furniture destroyed exceeded 52,191 dollars.

But the success of the rioters was short-lived. The burghers quickly rallied, and having placed themselves under the command of the commissary of police, the intrepid Brendamour, they united with the infantry detachment, and gallantly charged the rioters, seven of whom were killed and forty wounded in Mr. Cockerell's house; then rapidly advancing on the assailants of the prison, they killed, wounded, or dispersed the whole band, and before sunset the riot was quelled; and yet the whole force under the orders of Brendamour did not exceed 120 men, of whom forty only were military or police. Had General Bylandt and Mr.

* "Darstellung der Verhandlungen vor den Assisen zu Köln, 1831," &c. &c. Von J. Venedey, p. 94.

Knyff acted in this manner, the revolt at Brussels had shared a similar fate.

To trace the progress of popular fermentation, or to individualize the workings of the revolutionary leaven throughout the different Belgic provinces, would be superfluous. Suffice it to say, that, whilst the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and city of Ghent hitherto manifested little accord with the insurrection, and whilst Antwerp protested against a separation, which its merchants deprecated as ruinous to their interests,* Liege, Mons, Ath, Tournay, Namur, Leuze, Charleroy, Dinant, Verviers, and Louvain, with the whole Borrain and Wallon country, as well as that portion of the Flanders designated as the "Plat Pays," ardently sympathized with the capital. All eyes were, in fact, anxiously turned to the mother city. The whole of Belgium, with the exceptions above quoted, panted to follow the example of the metropolis. Brussels had become the grand focus, towards which all minor sparks converged.

The provincial governors scarcely retained a vestige of authority, and the regencies and civic corporations, whose powers emanated from government, were unable to resist the torrent of public opinion.

Thus the regency of Brussels found it necessary to adhere to the demand for separation, and consequently despatched a courier to the Hague with an address to that effect.† This example was followed by Liege and other cities, so that the only constituted authorities that could be considered as in any way connected with the machinery of the state were thus irresistibly drawn into the revolutionary vortex. The people had, in fact, obtained the most unequivocal supremacy, and if they

* See Appendix, No. 10. † See Appendix, No. 11.

did not launch into excesses, the merit certainly did not rest with the civil or military power. The moral influence of the former was reduced to complete insignificance, and the physical force of the latter utterly paralyzed. Both had become mere objects of derision.

But in proportion as the weakness of the government became more manifest, so did its apparent contempt for danger increase. Had it not laboured under the most incomprehensible delusion—had it not deceived itself as to its individual position in regard to the great powers, it surely would have abandoned that dilatory, vacillating course, utterly incompatible with the urgent necessities of the crisis. Had it not looked on the cause of the dynasty as integrally connected with that of all other monarchs, and considered its own preservation as antecedent to that of general peace, it would have embraced a system far different from that which it pursued from the 26th of Augnst, 1830, down to the winter of 1832, when it preferred retaining two useless forts on the Scheldt to the possession of two half provinces equal in wealth and population to a seventh of the old Netherlands.

Had the Netherlands cabinet possessed that enlightened perspicacity, that profound knowledge of the internal workings of popular feeling throughout Europe, previously ascribed to its diplomatists; had its statesmen been as remarkable for their penetration as regarded the *future*, as they were pre-eminent for the logical acumen and ability with which they debated the *past*, they must have felt assured that no medium, no compromise, was possible with the people at home, and that no assistance was probable from sovereigns abroad. Only one of two alternatives, therefore, remained—they should either have granted all, nay, more than all that was demanded, and thus placing themselves at the head

of the movement, have carried the people with them; or, boldly seizing rebellion by the forelock, they should have trampled it under foot ere it had time to reach maturity. Had they selected the first, the nation would have clung with ardour to the dynasty, and the liberals of Europe would have gone with them; had they chosen the second, all governments would have applauded, for then the outbreaking was universally execrated as a mere wanton, unjustifiable revolt.

It would almost appear that the Netherlands government was impressed with a conviction, not only that Europe had created the barrier kingdom expressively for the dynasty, in lieu of the dynasty having been merely superadded to the barrier; but that it laboured under the fallacious idea that the great powers having co-operated in its construction, in order to cement peace in 1814, would coalesce for general war, in order to maintain its integrity in 1830; forgetting that those halcyon days no longer existed, when the will of sovereigns was the will of nations, and that the people who furnish the sinews of war are now-a-days entitled to a voice in the disposal of their own blood and treasure. To this erroneous supposition may fairly be ascribed that tenacious adherence to a line of policy so pregnant with disastrous consequences to the dynasty which relied on it for support.

The errors of the government were not lost on its opponents, either in the metropolis or provinces; Liege, above all, signalized itself by its energetic fraternization with the capital. The functions of the Governor Sandberg being a mere dead letter, and General Boecop having withdrawn the garrison into the citadel, the public authority fell completely in the hands of the patriots. Fortunately, perhaps, for the security of property, those who placed themselves at the head of the

movement zealously devoted their attention to the prevention of pillage; whilst, at the same time, they adopted the most decided measures not only to fan the flame of revolt, but to fly to the succour of Brussels with men and arms. Louvain had given the first example of forcibly repulsing the royal troops; Liege went further—it sent forth a body of armed men with the avowed object of aiding in the subversion of the government.

It was at this period that the names of Messrs. Lebeau and Charles Rogier, both barristers practising in the Liege courts, first appeared on the political horizon. The first, whose honourable character and eloquence had obtained for him the confidence of his fellow-citizens, was selected as one of the deputation appointed to wait on the Prince of Orange at Brussels—a mission that he fulfilled with discretion and sagacity; the second, whose energy and liberal opinions had rendered him popular with the lower orders, was signalized as a fit person either to control or excite the people, and was consequently appointed commandant of the auxiliary urban guard.

The enthusiasm of the Liegers, which has in some measure been assimilated to that of the Marseillese during the French revolution, divested however of its ferocity, was excited to the utmost pitch by the reports of the concentration of the troops around Brussels. The capital was looked on as the heart, on which the vitality of the whole country depended. It was resolved, therefore, to speed to her assistance, not only with the view of aiding her in the hour of peril, but of stimulating the spirits of the Brussels citizens, of whom the most affluent were well known to be desirous for conciliation at almost any price.

Rallying round him a body of three or four hundred volunteers, whom he supplied with fire-arms taken from the armourers' warehouses, and paid for by receipts,

signed "*in the name of the Belgian people!*" M. Rogier put himself at their head, and commenced his march on the capital.

To the utter astonishment even of the very women, the adventurous band reached their destination in safety, bringing with them several cases of arms and two field pieces, on one of which was seated a veteran soldier, named Charlier, better known at a subsequent period as the "jambe de bois."

The arrival of Rogier's followers, for they scarcely merited the military denomination of detachment, though dreaded by the well-disposed citizens, who reluctantly saw the city daily filling with a mass of turbulent strangers, was hailed with enthusiasm by the multitude, who justly admired the boldness and success of the enterprise. For Rogier had traversed a route covered by detachments of the royal troops, who permitted both men and cannon to depart from Liege unmolested, and to make their triumphant entry into Brussels without offering them the slightest opposition.

This negligence on the part of the Netherlands commanders, whether proceeding from their own want of energy or from superior orders, was inconceivable. Had any one of them done their duty, this feeble and undisciplined horde ought to have been pursued, and, in case of resistance, either captured or put to the sword. To permit them to traverse the whole country with fixed bayonets, lighted matches and banners deployed, was a direct premium and encouragement to revolt, and gave them an idea of their own prowess and efficiency that produced the worst subsequent results.

The example of Liege was quickly followed by Jemmapes, Wavre, and other towns. Volunteers poured into the capital from all quarters, but for the most part in isolated detachments; without arms, save a few fowling pieces, and without any other object than that fever-

ish craving after mischief, which pervaded all the lower orders at that period. It was remarked also, that many foreigners, especially Frenchmen, several of whom were known agents of the Parisian propaganda had arrived in the city, and intermingled with the groups that formed in the public places, or harangued the frequenters of the coffee-houses, in language of the most violent and democratic nature. Many strangers also, previously resident in the city, now took an active share in the proceedings, and identified themselves with the cause of the people.

But whatever might have been the object of the strangers that flocked to Brussels, whether native or foreign, they were fortunately kept in check by the prudence of the citizens who held the reins of power; for if there was any vestige of legal authority remaining, it was entirely centered in the chiefs and staff of the burgher-guards. The provincial governor, M. Van der Fosse, declared that his functions were merely nominal. The regency was constrained to follow the impulsion given to it by popular opinion; whilst Mr. Knyff, the director of police, had abandoned his post on the departure of the Prince of Orange. Fortunately, M. Plaisant, a barrister of considerable popularity and influence, consented to take upon himself the arduous administration of that department; and, as a proof of his resolution to enforce submission to the laws, immediately effected the arrest of the leader of the gang of ruffians that had devastated the factories of Mr. Wilson at Uccles. It was, in fact, owing to the exertion of the new police director, that Fontaine, the man in question, was siezed, brought to trial, and subsequently condemned to the gallies for twenty years.

Independent of the arrival of the Liege volunteers, every possible means were adopted to excite the ardour

and sustain the courage of the citizens, many of whom began to complain of the irksomeness of constant military duty by day and night.

The greater part had taken up arms on the 26th and 27th for the protection of their property, but not with the view of being subjected during an indefinite period to all the restraint, fatigue, and loss of time and profit attendant on military service. None dared openly avow their sentiments; but the undeniable desire of the vast majority was to see the city once more restored to tranquillity, and themselves relieved from further duty, by the peaceable return of the royal troops. Besides, as the fear of a renewal of popular excesses gradually diminished, so also did their military ardour begin to relax. Calm consideration also opened to them a new vista of peril. They were in an open city, without other defence than a few barricades.

The royal troops were gradually closing up from Holland. The king appeared determined not to concede, and a struggle seemed inevitable. There was not one among them who did not feel convinced, that as soon as Prince Frederick had assembled his artillery, he would run up his guns to the eminences commanding the city, and reduce it, either to submission or to ashes—for it was not to be supposed that he would compromise the safety of his soldiers by street combats.

Repeated appeals and orders of the day were issued by General d'Hoogvorst, to stimulate the more affluent citizens to join the armed force, and a subscription was set on foot, the produce of which was destined to pay such of the poor classes who had come forward to enrol themselves.

But that alacrity so much desired was far from being evinced, and the utmost extent of the armed force did not exceed 3,500 men, of whom upwards of 900 were required for daily duty.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISTRESS OF THE LOWER CLASSES—BENEVOLENCE OF SEVERAL BELGIC FAMILIES—DINNER GIVEN TO DE POTTER AT PARIS—POSITION OF PRINCE FREDERICK'S ARMY—THEY WITHDRAW UPON A RECONNOISSANCE BEING MADE BY THE BELGIANS—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE ARRIVES AT THE HAGUE—MEETING BETWEEN HIM AND THE KING—A PROCLAMATION ISSUED BY HIM, EXASPERATES THE PEOPLE, WHO SEND A DEPUTATION TO VILVORDE TO PRINCE FREDERICK—DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY—VIOLENCE OF THE DUTCH JOURNALS—COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY APPOINTED AT BRUSSELS—MR. CARTWRIGHT ARRIVES.

ANOTHER serious source of uneasiness now began to manifest itself. During nearly ten days there had been a complete stagnation of business; there was no demand in the capital, no orders from the provinces, no money, no credit, no employment, and consequently no means of subsistence for the poor. The misery of the lower classes increased with alarming rapidity. With few exceptions, all the aristocracy had retired to their chateaux; and the English, who contributed so largely to the welfare of trade, had fled from the city. Such as remained put down their equipages, reduced their establishments, closed their shutters, wrote up "house empty," or, "to let," on their dwellings, and expended nothing more than was strictly essential for the wants of their families. The regency had offered to furnish employment in the ditches and canals around the city; but handycraftsmen, and artisans accustomed to the loom and other sedentary occupations, felt no inclination to take up the pick and the spade, and either re-

fused to work, or only accepted the offer in order to procure money to expend in liquor.

The prospect was melancholy, and the evil could only be averted by voluntary donations. For this purpose, a commission was appointed in each parish to proceed from door to door to gather contributions; but this only afforded limited assistance, and as the demand for labour decreased, the utmost alarm existed lest the augmenting distress should terminate in indiscriminate pillage. Fortunately, however, through the benevolence and exertions of the citizens in general, and especially through the philanthropic patriotism of the families of D'Ahremberg and Mérode, D'Hoogvorst, De Brouckère, Le Hon, Gendebien, and Méens, the calamity was averted; and, however great the sufferings of the poor, not a single instance of plunder or excess took place.

Notwithstanding this, the general enthusiasm felt for the national cause—for it had now assumed a more definite character of nationality—increased amongst the lower classes, and was augmented by reports from Paris, and a bold foreboding in the minds of the leaders, that there would be no foreign intervention in case of further struggle. The French journals published accounts of the flattering testimonials of sympathy and fraternization lavished on De Potter and his brother exiles. The English deputation which had crossed the Channel to felicitate the Parisians in the name of the London radicals, had waited upon, and complimented these exiles on their glorious martyrdom and the noble struggle in which their countrymen were engaged. A second banquet was offered to them by the Parisian national guard, and they were greeted with honours and applause not inferior to those once bestowed on the illustrious Franklin.

In the meanwhile several members of the States-General having arrived in Brussels, addressed a circular to their colleagues, urging them to assemble without loss of time in the capital, in order to confer as to the measures necessary to be adopted. Upon the first publication of the convocation of the chambers at the Hague, it had been resolved by several members not to obey the mandate; and this resolution, adhered to by others, was maintained up to the departure of the prince. But as a decision of this nature would have been tantamount to a declaration of overt rebellion, as it would have destroyed all possibility of subsequent negotiation, and reduced them to the necessity of seeking to obtain by force that which they hoped to acquire by concession, the previous determination was over-ruled; and it was unanimously resolved that the whole should proceed to the Hague, and there come at once to the question of separation.

This resolution was further confirmed by the intelligence that Baron Stassart, one of their body, who had proceeded as president of a deputation from Namur, had been grossly insulted by the populace at Rotterdam, and that, having narrowly escaped with his life, he had returned to Belgium without effecting the object of his journey. Though this intelligence was far from consolatory, the Belgian deputies declared that it would now be an act of cowardice to pursue their original intention; and the whole, with the exception of one or two detained by illness, took their departure.

Events were now rapidly drawing towards a crisis. Each day was stamped by some fresh act of audacity on the part of the people, and afforded some proof of timidity and vacillation on that of the royal commanders. Yet the position occupied by the force under the orders of Prince Frederick, presented every advantage for hem-

ming in the city. To talk of a stratagetical position, when his royal highness had only an open town, and an undisciplined multitude, without artillery in his front, would be an insult to the very art of war. His business was so simple, so plain and straightforward, that it is scarcely possible to conceive how he could have erred. His main body, consisting of about six thousand infantry, was concentrated on Vilvorde and Malines and the adjacent villages, with its reserves on Contich and Antwerp. His right rested on the high road to Ghent, between Assche and Brussels; and his left extended by Dieghem, across the Louvain Chaussée, to that which passes through Terveuren; thus intercepting all the great communications leading to the capital, except those by Waterloo and Halle. His rear was secure, and every day added to his force. The sturdy Dibbets held Maestricht. Chassé was in Antwerp. Van Gheen in the citadel of Namur, and Boecop in that of Liege. The Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar was in force at Ghent. Schepern and Goethals held Ostend and Bruges. Mons and Tournay had both sufficient garrisons at least to defend the citadels, and thence to overawe the subjacent towns But in less than a fortnight the whole was wrested from the hands of the king.

At length the populace carried their temerity so far as to sally from the city, and to reconnoitre the country to some distance. Having, on one of these occasions, met with a detachment of the royal army occupying Terveuren, they not only threw themselves into position with the air of men about to make an attack, but dispatched an officer to the head-quarters, calling on the prince to order his troops to fall back, and holding him responsible for the consequences. To the astonishment of the citizens themselves, this preposterous request was instantly complied with.

In lieu of replying, that, although he should do all in his power to avoid shedding blood, he was prepared to maintain his ground, and protect his troops from insult, his royal highness permitted his soldiers to be bearded, insulted, and absolutely forced to retire from Terveuren before a handful of rabble, armed for the most part with sticks, fowling-pieces, or any other weapons that fell in their way. In lieu of gradually concentrating his forces, and drawing them nearer and still nearer, so as to envelope the whole city, and thus intercept its external communication, he withdrew his head-quarters to Antwerp, broke up his camp, threw his battalions back into more distant cantonments, and left all the communications perfectly free. His detachments, it is true, went through the puerile form of stopping diligences or travelling carriages, but they permitted armed detachments, cannon, stores, and provisions to pass unmolested.

Whilst Prince Frederick was thus, as it were, playing the game of the party opposed to him, his brother had hastened with all speed to the Hague. On his arrival, he was not only received with unbounded enthusiasm by the people, who on hearing of his entry into Brussels, had looked on him as lost, but the king hastened himself to meet him, and a scene of the most affecting nature took place between them.

But the joy felt by the monarch at the safe return of a son, who he hoped had brought tidings of submission and the re-integration of the Orange flag, was converted into grief and astonishment when the truth was unfolded to him. True to his promise, the Prince of Orange lost not a moment in acting up to the assurances he had given the assembly at Brussels. He entered into a full detail of all that had passed, and earnestly beseeched his sovereign to lose no time in granting their request.

His royal highness advocated their cause with a degree of warmth and energy which deeply affected the latter, without, however, in any way operating a favourable change in his plans.

Yielding, however, to the overwhelming torrent of public opinion, the king had already accepted the resignation of M. Van Maanen. The honourable retreat of this veteran servant of the throne was made officially known to the public on the 3d of September. But this concession, so ardently, so long desired by the people, now came too late. Had it been granted a month earlier, had M. Van Maanen then insisted on retiring, in order to feel the sincerity of the public pulse, he would have rendered the king an important service. It would have then been seen whether he was a mere pretext or a real cause, and he would have spared himself and the king the pain of being compelled to yield to that very obsession to which the latter expressed such decided repugnance. But the separation having been demanded, the retreat of M. Van Maanen was looked on with indifference.

A cabinet council having been summoned, the Prince of Orange detailed the result of his mission, and concluded by avowing his conviction that an administrative separation was the only course left to prevent more disastrous consequences. Messrs. De la Coste and Van Gobelschroy, ministers for the home and colonial departments, both Belgians, warmly supported the prince, who offered again to return to Brussels with the two ministers, answering on his head for the immediate restoration of order, if he was furnished with full powers to act as he might think best for the general good.

Had the king accepted this offer, there had been an end to the revolution. Had he said, "Go, my son, lose not a moment's time; tell the Belgians that in accepting the united sceptre, I had no other object in view

but the welfare of the people; and that the interests of the dynasty are nothing in comparison with those of the nation. I appoint you my viceroy, and grant you full and unlimited powers to promise my future consent to a separation; but that it is my duty, as a constitutional monarch, to demand at the hands of the national representation, a bill of indemnity to exonerate me from infringing the fundamental law, as well as the treaties by which I am bound." Had the prince returned to Brussels with a short proclamation to the above effect, it is more than probable that the Orange banner would be seen waving at this moment, by the side of that of Brabant, on the towers of St. Gudule.

It is true the situation of the monarch was most embarrassing; he was not only enchained by the fundamental law, but by treaties; and to a mind so essentially methodical and pacific; a mind so strongly imbued with the omnipuissance of legitimacy, the idea of anticipating his subjects and his allies in the violation of both, must have appeared a most desperate measure. But had he sprung from his throne on the back of the revolutionary charger, and widely unfurled the banner of liberty, so often displayed by his glorious ancestors, not only all Belgium would have fallen prostrate at his feet, but even the French sceptre was not altogether without his grasp. The revolution of 1688 had given a Nassau to Great Britain. That of 1830 might have placed a descendant of the same house on the throne of the Gauls.

The king's immediate adhesion to the projected separation was likewise rendered less difficult, since it was met without extreme disfavour by the cabinet, and accorded with the views of a majority of the Dutch commercial oligarchy, whose jealousy of Antwerp was daily increased by the rising prosperity of that place. With such an arrangement, the revival of the barrier system

as regarded the Scheldt, was not considered impracticable, and to obtain that object Amsterdam and Rotterdam would have consented to almost any other sacrifices.

But in proportion as the crisis was urgent, and demanded energetic action and presence af mind, so was the conduct of the cabinet torpid and procrastinating. The advice of the Prince of Orange was neglected, and his politic offer declined. It was resolved to adhere firmly to the fundamental law, when the Belgians demanded its abrogation, and to appeal to treaties which the great powers were resolved to abandon. The only result, therefore, of the council was a vague and indefinate proclamation, which, although it teemed with regrets for the past, held out little hopes for the future.*

This document, though replete with sentiments most honourable to the king's heart, and most essentially moderate and constitutional throughout, was in no way suited to the urgency of the moment. Indeed, no sooner was it published in Brussels, than it was torn from the walls, trampled under foot, or burned in the public squares, amidst shouts of defiance and derision. So vivid was the excitement generally produced, that it was deemed expedient to assemble a council of notables at the Hôtel de Ville, who, rather with the view of applying a temporary remedy than with any hope of ultimate benefit, decided that a deputation should wait on Prince Frederick at Vilvorde, to intreat his royal highness to unite his efforts with those of his elder brother, in order to obtain the king's consent to the demand for separation,

This deputation, composed entirely of members of the States-General, was affably received by the prince,

* See Appendix, No. 12.

who listened with profound attention to their observations. But whilst he replied on general points with that caution and reserve pecular to his character, he frankly avowed that the proposition for separation was likely to meet with opposition from the crown, both in its individual and European character. And although he was convinced the king would be ready to sacrifice all personal considerations for the welfare of the country, the obstacles to their principal demand were such as could not be overcome without great efforts and protracted negociations, both at home and abroad. Upon this occasion Prince Frederick acted with a degree of prudence and discretion, that showed him to have been initiated into his father's views, and no ways disposed to yield to those emotions of the heart, that had induced the Prince of Orange to hold forth fallacious hopes, which he must have known were directly opposed to the king's most cherished theories.

In the meanwhile the populace of the capital continued to adopt the most energetic measures for defence. The trees of the boulevards were felled, and converted into stockades, the adjacent buildings were loopholded, the barricades at the different gates and streets debouching on the ramparts were strengthened, and those in the interior of the city multiplied, so as to interrupt the circulation of wheel carriages and horses.

During this time the inhabitants of the country were far from tranquil. Bands of poachers and trespassers infested the forests, destroying the game and timber, in defiance of the keepers and woodreaves, who either abandoned their posts, or were put to flight by the marauders. The châteaux and country residences of the nobility and gentry, especially in Hainault, were assailed by groups of sturdy mendicants or volunteers on their road to the capital, who, with shouts of "*vive*

la liberté" on their tongues, and arms in their hands, endeavoured to levy contributions of money or provisions, so that on more than one occasion the proprietors were obliged to repulse them by force. The greatest alarm every where prevailed, lest a general system of plunder and incendiarism should commence, and that the terrible cry of "war to the châteaux," which had filled France with so much misery and bloodshed in 1793, should serve as a rallying cry to the bands that now traversed the country, under the pretence of flying to the assistance of the metropolis.

In order if possible to guard against misfortune, the provincial councils (*états deputés*) issued a rescript to the municipal authorities, inviting them to arm the citizens, to establish guards and patrols, and in short to adopt a general system of watch and ward. But the moral power of the government had lost all its influence, and this document signed by the governor produced no beneficial results. Individuals were, therefore, left to adopt such measures for their own security as suited the position of their property, or the means at their disposal.

Fortunately, the moral disposition of the people generally rose superior to the temptations and incitements to plunder and misrule that now presented themselves. The eyes and hearts of all seemed turned towards Brussels. The levy en masse, for so it might be called, had every where commenced, particularly in the Wallon countries. The peasant abandoned his plough, the weaver his loom, and the miner his pick. Indeed, all classes of the labouring population quitted their daily avocations, and flocked towards the capital, where they expected to live at free quarters and to enjoy all the ease and idleness of a soldier's life, without any of its restraints. The tax of lodging and feeding this influx of

exigent strangers, uncontrolled by any discipline or law, at length became so irksome as to cause the greatest discontent and uneasiness to the Brussels householders. The strongest remonstrances were consequently made to the staff of the burgher-guard, which now represented the public force. It was attempted to arrest the evil by means of a proclamation; in which the volunteers were thanked for their patriotic intentions, but earnestly requested "to remain at home, and there hold themselves in readiness to fly to the succour of their Brussels brethren, should the interests of the country require their aid."

Though the effervescence in Belgium had now risen to an overwhelming pitch, the exasperation in the northern provinces was little inferior. The whole Dutch nation joined in one unanimous demonstration of loyalty to the throne and of execration at the conduct of the southerns. This outcry of hatred and defiance was re-echoed by the public press, and being thence re-copied into the Belgian papers, added fresh fuel to the animosity and excitement of the latter. The Hague *Stadts Courant*, or official journal, did not attempt to disguise the sentiments of the government. In a leading article of the 7th of September, it announced that "the king having learned with indignation the continuation of the rebellion, and resistance to the legal authorities in some parts of S. Brabant and Liege, had issued the strictest orders to the governors and commanders to spare neither pains or trouble to strike at the root of the evil, and to repulse force by force." The *Arnheim Journal*, under the same date, distinguished itself by a most violent article. "The rebels," said this paper, "demand the separation of the two portions of the kingdom. They refuse to unite with the Prince of Orange in the cry of '*Vive le Roi*' until their demands are satisfied.

Who is it that calls for this separation? Is it the representatives of all Belgium? No! it is merely a few rebel burghers of Brussels and Liege, with seven members of the States-General, amongst whom is the contemptible Count de Celles. To arms then! down with the rebels! *Blood of rebels is not brothers' blood!* This is the language that resounds in the hearts of the inhabitants of Holland, Gueldres, Friesland, Groningen, Utrecht, N. Brabant, and the majority of the Flanders." The *Nederlandsche Gedachten*, another journal, also contained the following expressions:—"No more parlies or negotiations unless supported by cannon! War to the rebels—war to the knife."

This language, though essentially impolitic as regarded Belgium, not only faithfully expressed the sentiments of the Dutch nation, but found an echo throughout the greater part of Europe. The real nature of the long-standing grievances that had led to the Belgic revolt were scarcely known, even to the members of the diplomatic corps, and still less by the cabinets or people whom they represented. The character of the movement itself was completely misunderstood; it was universally held to be the wanton, uncalled-for rebellion of a few incendiary democrats, against the mild and paternal government of the most enlightened sovereign in Europe. It was declared to be a disgusting plagiary of the "July days," without any of the characteristics that ennobled that event. It was proclaimed to be a revolt without cause or object; a jacobinical effort to destroy, without any prospect of rebuilding. It was said, that the call for a disunion with Holland was a mere pretext for a reunion with France; and that the sole object of the principal actors in these rebellious proceedings, was to rekindle those passions that commenced to subside in France, and thence, under the

pretext of supporting liberal institutions, to plunge all Europe in a war of opinions.

At this period the cause of the Belgian people was most essentially anti-European, whilst that of the Dutch found sympathy in every bosom. With the exception of the French, and a small party in England, all hearts, all voices, were turned against the former. Never had a nation to struggle against greater moral difficulties; never was a political cause more unpopular. Had their destiny been left to the arbitration of the people of England and Germany, one unanimous shout would have hurled them back prostrate beneath the footstool of Dutch ascendancy. Even the most liberal English journals lukewarmly advocated their cause; whilst the rest of the press, both in Great Britain and Germany, joined in fulminating the severest anathemas against them. Nay, men whose pens had hitherto advocated the cause of liberty, turned against them, and stigmatized their efforts to obtain redress as the odious machinations of a few anarchists.

If, at a later date, these bitter prejudices were in some measure softened, they were partly indebted to the prudent and moderate conduct of their own statesmen and diplomatists, and partly to the exertions of a few zealous friends, who advocated their cause through the medium of the English and German press; that is to say, in such few instances as the censorship of the latter would permit the insertion of articles favourable to their cause.* But, if the Belgians imagined that their cause was popular; if they supposed that the hearts of

* Neither the *Augsbourg Gazette*, the *Berlin Staats Zeitung*, or any of the influential German journals, would accept any article that in any way tended to advocate their cause. Even to a recent period the whole of the Trans-Rhenan press was devoted to the King of the

the British or German nation, generally speaking, were with them, they laboured under a fearful delusion.

No: Europe had to choose between republican war or Belgian independence, and it selected the latter, as a species of political vaccination, necessary to prevent the diffusion of a malignant malady. The Belgians sagaciously profited by the dilemma; but they could not flatter themselves that they owed it to any universal desire for their consolidation as a power. Their tutelar deity was "the force of events," not the justness of their cause; and, perhaps, they were more indebted to topography than to any other accessory. Had nature placed them at only twenty leagues from the French frontier, they never would have rebelled, or, if insurgent, would have been crushed with trifling effort. They were, in fact, an ardent firebrand, placed at the very mouth of a mine, whose slightest agitation might send forth a spark that would have caused the most terrific explosion. They might be compared to fulminating powder, which receives life from concussion. It was, therefore, a stroke of admirable policy to render them harmlessly inactive.

It is but just, however, to say, that in proportion as the political horizon darkened around, so did their moral energy or outward daring augment. They perceived that the hearts of all men were turned against them; but, more penetrating and sagacious than the king, their sovereign, they felt convinced that tongues and pens might anathematize, but that no sword would quit its scabbard to smite them. They were, moreover, certain of the moral support of France, and the physical

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Netherlands, by which means the most violent prejudices were excited against Belgium, without its being possible to soften their effects.

neutrality of all Europe; and, being four millions, they had some right to calculate that they were equal to cope single-handed with a people not exceeding half that number. Their only fear was lest England, after coming to an arrangement with France, might consent to the pressing solicitations of the Dutch cabinet, and send a body of troops to Ostend and Antwerp.

Their courage and audacity would have redoubled had they been aware that the British minister, to whom this proposition was made, frankly avowed his determination to avoid all armed intervention. "If the King of the Netherlands cannot maintain the crown which we have placed on his head, I should deserve to lose mine if I plunged Europe into war to enable him to hold it" —is reported to have been the reply made by the British monarch, when urged to lend himself to the proposed intervention. England and Europe are now reaping the benefits of this prudence.

In proportion as time shall shed fresh lights on the past, so will Europe be convinced that the Belgians deserve not only sympathy, but that the King of the Netherlands merits much that has occurred to him—not as a man, for there he stands spotless—but as a politician, and there the blots are endless. On this score Europe has a heavy balance against him; for by a series of injudicious and impolitic proceedings, he ruined the barrier that had cost so much labour to construct, and would fain have plunged the Continent into another bloody and expensive war, to recover that which he ought never to have abandoned. Nay more, when Great Britain was striving to remodel that barrier, upon a basis more solid than before; when she was exerting every nerve to establish his own son as its guardian; the same ill-fated tenacity, the same half-energetic

measures, the same bastard policy ruined all, and eventually forced those who were sincerely devoted to his interests to act against him, as though they had been his bitterest foes.

At the period that the language above alluded to was employed by the Dutch journals, a prudent government would have exerted every effort to restrain the violence of the press; it would have implored the editors to maintain moderation and reserve so long as there was a prospect of avoiding civil war. It would have preserved secrecy as to its own intentions, and waited until the sword was drawn to launch forth exasperating diatribes, and have met the vituperations of the Belgian papers by dignified and politic silence. For what was the consequence? "The language of the Dutch journals was so clear, so decided, that it was held prudent not to lose another moment. It was universally felt that all would be lost if the nation retreated a single step. Measures still more energetic and decisive were declared to be necessary, and it was said to be high time to place chiefs at the head of the movement at Brussels, which carried that of all Belgium in its train, and that it was essential to destroy, or at least to paralyze, the action of the established authorities."*

In these lines, extracted from a work, which gives a faithful portrait of the workings of popular opinion during the early part of the revolution, one finds the first germs of national independence, or rather the formation of a distinct government. The subject presented many difficulties, and furnished matter for the most animated discussions. So long as the members of the States-General were at the Hague, so long as the southern pro-

* "Esquisses Historiques de la Revolution de Belgique. Brussels, 1830," p. 142.

vinces had not thrown off all semblance of allegiance, the greatest caution was necessary, not only in the selection of the individuals destined to form this collateral power, but in the collective title they were to assume. The idea of a *provisional government* was the first thing that presented itself, and was in fact the object to which tended all their views; but the assumption of such a title would have been a direct declaration of revolution and disunion. It would have been an immediate subversion, not only of the regency and provincial authority, but of the king's government, and would have destroyed all possibility of negociation or conciliation. In such case, nothing would have remained for the king but to abandon the sceptre, or to cast aside the scabbard and treat them as determined rebels.

The first measure openly proposed was the formation of a "committee of public safety,"—but this met with much opposition, not from the form, but the appellation. The title was considered as too republican and ultra-revolutionary in its attributes, and to be a servile imitation of the French in 1793. Reminiscences of the "days of terror" recurred to men's minds; the convention, the guillotine, Robespierre, Danton, and their blood-stained colleagues rose before the assembly, decked in all their sanguinary horrors. It was important to inspire confidence, and not to excite terror. At length the title of "commission of public surety" was adopted, though the affinity between this designation and that of "committee of public safety" is so strong as to require more than ordinary subtlety to distinguish the difference.

This being determined, an invitation was addressed to the members of the States-General to assemble at the town-hall, "in order to concert with the burgher-guard staff as to the measures necessary to be adopted, in the then critical position of the southern provinces."

The meeting having formed itself into a committee or council, it was unanimously resolved that a commission should be created, under the proposed title, to be specially charged—first, with watching over the conservation of the dynasty;—secondly, with insuring the maintenance of the principles of separation between the north and south; and, thirdly, with protecting the commercial and industrial interests of the country.

With a view of still preserving some outward show of deference for the government, it was further enacted that the resolution should be submitted to the ratification of the governor and regency.—A mere mockery! for the two latter had but nominal existence, the whole authority being in the hands of the burgher-guards. The position of the regency was perplexing. They had no means of resisting the encroachment of the illegal power that was destined to subvert their own, and still less were they entitled to sanction or authorize its definitive constitution.

At such a juncture they could not renounce office without deserting their duty, and yet the only dignified course to pursue, was to have declared the projects of the council to be illegal, and their own functions incompatible with the co-existence of any such body as the proposed commission. But they fell into the same vacillating system that characterized the general proceedings of the government. They first objected, then consented, and lastly, finding themselves borne down by the torrent, they abandoned their post.

It was further decided by the council, that the eight sections should be called on to select delegates to represent them in the selection of the members of the commission. These delegates, consisting of eight commandants, eight officers, eight non-commissioned and as many private, were quickly chosen, and joined the staff and

notables assembled at the town-hall. Here they resolved themselves into a committee, comprising about sixty individuals, and forthwith proceeded to the nomination of sixteen persons, from whom it was intended the regency should select eight, to form the definitive commission.

These resolutions were instantly transmitted to the regency, which, whilst it admitted its incompetency, eventually confirmed this proceeding; thus making it appear as if the work of the revolted burghers was the act of the local government.

The eight candidates selected by the regency were, the Duke d'Ursel, Prince de Ligne, Baron Frederick Secus, Count Felix de Mérode, Messrs. Alexander Gendebien, Van de Weyer, Ferdinand Méeus and Rouppe. The four first were intended to represent the high aristocracy and Catholic party; the two next the bar; the seventh, the financial interests; and the latter the citizens in general. But the letter of the regency, communicating their selection, having contained some modification of the proposed resolution, the five last mentioned persons declined the appointment. The result was, that the municipality, now in the very throes of death, gave the last feeble signs of existence, by announcing its adhesion to the original resolution, merely adding to the last article, the words "public order." * This act was the immediate forerunner of the departure of the governor, burgher-master, and the majority of the fifteen members of the town council; so that all vestige of the constituted authorities was effaced, and the basis of a new government henceforward established.

Of the eight members thus selected, five announced their definitive installation by proclamation; but the Duke d'Ursel, who probably felt the illegality of the whole proceeding, neither accepted nor returned any reply.

* See Appendix, No 13.

Baron Secus excused himself on the plea of urgent domestic business; and the Prince de Ligne declined, because, according to his own expression, "though an inhabitant of Belgium, he was bound by oaths to the Emperor of Austria, and thought that his position did not permit him to form part of a commission, which would perhaps compel him to contract other political engagements."

The conduct of this young nobleman was much criticised at the moment, and his secession was felt the more bitterly by the patriots, as the weight of his name, and his connexion with the Catholic party, were calculated to give strength and dignity to their proceedings both at home and abroad.

Although the commission endeavoured to disguise its real object, from its first installation it assumed absolute power: but whatever may have been the latent views of its members, it is but justice to say that they succeeded in maintaining perfect tranquillity in the city.

Notwithstanding the multitude of strangers that thronged the streets—and these mostly of the lower classes—notwithstanding the subversion of the legitimate authorities, and the universal apparent disorder, not one outrage, and scarcely a single act of robbery, took place. The theatre re-opened on the 12th; the country people arrived as usual with their produce to market; the shops were unbarred, and there was a renewed appearance of business and animation. But with all this there was no confidence; alarm, anxiety, and all the uncertainties inherent in civil troubles, generally prevailed. Indeed, so great was the distrust, that men hesitated to give value for the notes of the bank, so that the burgher-guard was compelled to issue an order of the day, declaring "that there was no cause for panic; that the principal merchants had

agreed to receive those notes, and that instructions had been issued to all tax-gatherers and receivers to accept them in payment.

In the meanwhile the city presented a strange and incoherent aspect. Bands of volunteers, some armed with pikes, others with rusty muskets, preceded by drums and banners, paraded the streets, now rending the air with patriotic outcries, and now roaring in discordant chorus the *Marseillese* or *Brabançonne*. But they inspired terror, if not disgust, with almost all but the lowest classes. As they passed, men closed their doors, averted their heads, or looked on them with that half-dread, half-curiosity, that may be observed when in times of pestilence the dead-cart is seen hastening by with its corrupted freight.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Cartwright, first secretary to the British embassy to the Hague, arrived at Brussels with instructions to report on the state of the city. But, however zealous and intelligent he might have been, neither his position or political opinions were calculated to enable him to form the most correct or unbiassed judgment.

Imbued with the principles of the administration he served; cramped by that unpropitiatory reserve, that devotion to routine which generally characterizes English diplomacy; hampered by those forms which, however well adapted to ordinary times, are incompatible with a revolutionary crisis, when moments are more pregnant with events than years at other periods; being looked on with suspicion by the leaders of the movement, and misled by its opponents, he could neither penetrate the views of the one, nor elicit the truth from the others. Unable to glean any thing from the former, the latter laboured to convince him that Prince Frederick had but to present himself at the head of his

legions, and that all the respectable burghers would eagerly throw open their gates and arms to receive him, concealing from him at the same time that they had nothing but vows to offer, and that his royal highness could not rely upon any forcible co-operation, or any attempt to level those barricades that were raised and guarded by the people, who were now lords paramount.

If, however, the reports forwarded to the British ambassador at the Hague did mislead him, and tend to confirm the King of the Netherlands in the line of policy he had embraced, such a result was not unnatural; for, it is indisputable that a large portion of the citizens did most ardently sigh for the re-establishment of order, and if submission did not ensue, the fault lay with the impolitic government and its unskilful commanders, and not with them.

An administrative separation, with a vice-royalty, was perhaps inevitable, but the idea of a total divorce had not seriously suggested itself to a single individual; or, if it did lurk at the bottom of one or two hearts, it only glimmered there as a visionary theory. It cannot be too often repeated that the outbreaking was not against the house of Nassau, but against Dutch preponderance and monopoly. "The Belgians," said De Potter, through his organ the *Tribune des Départements*, "can and ought to shake off the Dutch yoke; and if they do not wish for more, they deserve some credit. If the chief of the reigning house shall oppose their legitimate emancipation, let him alone bear the penalty, and let him see the federative republic of the Belgian provinces arise by the side of his Batavian kingdom." But even De Potter, in the wildest intoxication of his Parisian triumph, dreamed as little of absolute separation as of the realization of his republican hypothesis.

Any diplomatic agent arriving at Brussels under circumstances parallel to those of the English secretary, was liable to adopt similar conclusions; not only because the aristocracy, hereditary, financial, and commercial, as well as the great mass of citizens, declared themselves hostile to all commotion, but because the force at the disposal of the Dutch generals, if judiciously employed, was amply sufficient to overwhelm the capital, and to reduce it to submission, without the necessity of firing a single shot. Amongst the respectable householders there was doubtless a general desire for amendment, for redress of grievances, and perhaps for separation, but none for revolution. It is not amongst that class that the germs of movement are ever to be found. The men that invoke civil commotion are those turbulent, designing spirits, who, in most cases, have nothing to lose, and consequently nothing to fear. But those, who constitute the groundwork of the social system, who may be said to represent the legitimate interests and sources of national prosperity (and these interests are incontestibly centered in commerce, industry, and agriculture)—those, having "given hostages to fortune," must ever be adverse to intestine troubles.

Of all the elements of social existence, none are so essential to fathers of families, merchants, tradesmen, and agriculturists, as perfect repose. Consult each individual of this class abstractedly, and he will be found more ready to submit to moderate absolutism that guarantees uninterrupted tranquillity, than to court immoderate liberty, which, in nine cases out of ten, entails abuse, if not abridgment of freedom. To such men, any deviation from the ordinary practice of life brings with it curtailment of liberty; for to them, liberty is the faculty of continuing their wonted pursuits without restraint. It does not consist in the power of deposing

this monarch, or of electing that prince; but in being able to employ the whole faculties of their minds and bodies in improving their fortunes, and thus adding to the welfare of their country whilst they enrich themselves.

To such men revolutions never can be divested of terror, or separated from ideas of vengeance and proscription. They argue, and argue wisely, that agitation brings with it loss—immediate loss without any prospect of ultimate gain; that they may sow, but others will probably reap, and this is the touchstone of their politics. Besides, there must be victims, and they know that these victims in most cases are the wealthy and innocent. They cannot assent to the theory that revolutions in the body politic are like to epidemics in the body physical—temporary evils, that are often destined to produce permanent benefits—momentary visitations, by which one generation or race of men is made to suffer for the advantage of their successors. Indifferent to theories, they draw their conclusions from material rules. The aspect of their balance-sheet is their barometer—a sane philosophy.

Political tempests and revolts cannot be the working of such men, nor can their opinions ever be relied on in times of trouble. The *vis inertiæ* of thousands of this class presents a feeble barrier to the progression of those ruthless, daring spirits, who staking their existence on the turn of a die, would fain rise to eminence, not by progressive labour, but by one desperate bound. For such as these, revolutions have no terrors. For, if they fail or fall, their elevation is so small as to secure them from injury. Amongst them there may be here and there a martyr, but the mass generally escape unhurt. Such, however, are the men whose actions and resources should be most minutely studied during civil commotion.

As to the ulterior measures coming within the higher province of diplomacy, the question stood nearly on a similar ground. The veil that obscured the future was impenetrable even to the most practised eye. No man, however sagacious, could venture to calculate the chances of the morrow; for at that time hazard or fortune held the scales. However, conversant with its influences, no one could presume to divine results so extraordinary as those which followed, or to calculate on the triumph of opinions, so diametrically opposed to those that had so long formed the basis of British and European policy. To imagine that the Netherlands monarchy, the adopted child of the Holy Alliance, should be abandoned by its step-parents; that the treaties of London and Vienna should be violated; that a handful of undisciplined volunteers, commanded by a Spanish exile, should repulse a well-organized and brave army, under veteran generals; or that an enthralled people, who, during eighteen centuries, had been bandied about from one power to another, at the will of despotic monarchs, should suddenly lift up their heads, and, by a succession of incalculable chances, ultimately succeed not only in giving check to all Europe, but in asserting that independence and nationality for which they had vainly struggled through a succession of ages—to have imagined or predicted any such events on September, 1830, would have subjected the speculator to the derision of the whole diplomatic and political body.

CHAPTER XIV.

OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL AT THE HAGUE—THE KING'S SPEECH—IRKSOME SITUATION OF THE BELGIC DEPUTIES—MARRIAGE OF PRINCESS MARIANE—EXASPERATION IN BELGIUM CREATED BY THE KING'S SPEECH—CIVIL WAR INEVITABLE.

THE southern deputies having reached the Hague, the extraordinary session convoked for the 13th of September, was opened on that day by the king in person, with the usual ceremonies, but with unwonted tokens of popular attachment. Although the whole of the members, both Dutch and Belgian, wore the orange cockade, the latter maintained an imperturbable silence, amidst the enthusiastic demonstrations of loyalty that burst from the house and galleries upon the entry and departure of the monarch; acclamations that were less grateful to the ears of the southerns, from their being intermingled with menaces and cries of "Down with the rebels! down with the incendiaries!"

The speech delivered by the king, as well as the royal message, subsequently communicated to the second chambers, by the president, Mr. Corver-Hooft, are historical documents of deep interest.* Though the former was evidently founded on the same system of policy that dictated the proclamation of the 5th of September, and reply to the Brussels deputation, it was more clear

* See Appendix, No. 14.

and explicit, and its language, though temperate and conciliatory, was firm and dignified. The facts it advanced were, with slight exception, founded on incontrovertible truths, and the measures it proposed to adopt were in strict unison with the fundamental law, and the regular march of a representative government.

It was not possible for a constitutional monarch, and indeed for the chief of a state, no matter what its form or designation, to embrace a line of conduct, or to utter sentiments more essentially conformable with the law he had sworn to maintain. Having once convoked the chambers, all he could do was to submit the demands of the nation to the wisdom of their deliberations, and to declare his readiness to co-operate in any measures that might be deemed beneficial to the common weal. To attempt to subvert the fundamental law, without the sanction of the assembled states, would have been an arbitrary and illegal assumption of power. The question of separation, however loudly called for by the Belgians, and however well adapted to the vows of a portion of the Dutch people, was not within the King's attributes. It appertained wholly and solely to the national representation, and so long as the united chambers existed, it was his bounden duty to appeal to their verdict. It is true the subject of the numerous grievances complained of by the southern provinces was but faintly alluded to; but as these grievances were all absorbed in the paramount question of separation, any recurrence to them would have been superfluous.

Ill-adapted as the language of the speech, or the regular mode of the proceeding might be, to satisfy the impatient ardour of a people resolved neither to submit to the ordinary delays of parliamentary discussion, or to rest content with any thing less than immediate and unconditional concession, it was imperative for the crown

to adhere rigidly to the charter so long as a single vestige of the code remained in force. And thus far, the king's speech was a model of constitutional excellence. But on a strict consideration of the relative situation of both parties, the language of the king will prove infinitely less frank and loyal than appears at first sight. It was admitted to be essentially constitutional, and in strict conformity with the letter of the law. But the evil lay in the very law itself.

The vicious composition of the national representation, and the facility of commanding anti-Belgic majorities, have already been alluded to. The mischief arising from this system was notorious to the nation. The readiness with which government obtained packed majorities had led to some of the most obnoxious grievances. Any reference therefore to the States-General, upon a question of such vital interest, however constitutional in form, was in point of fact a complete delusion. It was merely submitting the proposition to the States, that it might undergo the parliamentary forms of rejection, and thus obtain a bill of indemnity for refusing that which government had neither the will to grant, nor the courage to deny, thereby shifting the whole odium on the representatives of the people.

If any hope did exist of obtaining redress from the States, prior to their assembling on the 13th, this prospect entirely vanished when the symptoms of antipathy and exasperation exhibited by many of the Dutch members became known. So undisguised were these sentiments that, on the Prince de Gavre, president of the united chambers, uttering the usual concluding formula in French, M. Byleveldt, deputy for Zeland, declared that he would not sit and listen to that language in their house, and that he should withdraw; a threat he put into execution amidst the plaudits of the

public. But here was the dilemma. The king could not adopt any other course without falling into illegality, nor could the Belgians withdraw their pretensions without the certainty of relapsing into their former state of servitude. Experience had taught them that when their interests were concerned, they had nothing to hope from the sympathy of their northern brethren. The consequence was that the speech, in lieu of pouring oil on the troubled waters, served but to increase the fury of the waves.

However clear and straightforward the king's position might have appeared, it was nevertheless most singularly embarrassing and critical. He was placed between two most conflicting elements—constitutionality and policy; that is, between his desire to maintain the charter, by which he risked to sacrifice his crown; and the violation of laws and treaties, by which he would have sacrificed his principles. He was called upon to conciliate Belgium without offending Holland; to flatter the prejudices of the one whilst he satisfied the demands of the other. He had a duty to perform, not only to his subjects and the great powers, subscribers to the treaty of Vienna, but to the Agnates of the house of Nassau and to the Germanic diet, of whom he was the barrier shepherd. And, without violating national law and international treaties, he could not effect any modification in the code that united him with the one, or in the pact that bound him to the other, unless he had the previous concurrence of all the contracting parties.

Such was the opinion of the statesmen of the day, who, whilst they admitted the urgency of an administrative separation, condemned the king for taking the initiative in proposing it to the State; so much so indeed, that the great powers actually availed themselves of the message of the 13th September, to palliate their

abandonment of his cause. For when called on by the Netherlands cabinet to maintain the treaty of Vienna, they referred the king to his own message, and tauntingly declared that he himself had given the first example of infraction, by proposing a separation which was in direct variance with the very treaties he urged them to uphold.

But that which excited most strongly the distrust and exasperation of the southern provinces, was the dilatory mode of proceeding adopted by the chambers. In despite of the critical situation of the monarchy, and the evident necessity of instantly discussing the questions embodied in the message, the same tedious formalities, the same lingering routine that marked the commencement of the ordinary legislative sessions, were adhered to in this; so that upwards of eight days elapsed ere the sections made their report on the reply to the address, and in fact civil war had commenced ere the message had been subjected to preparatory deliberation.

Even admitting that there was no absolute urgency, it would have been politic in the government to show a desire to court instant discussion. Whilst it took all the necessary measures to carry its views secretly and promptly into effect, it should have called on the chambers to continue permanently sitting, or, at all events, to proceed at once to the main point, and thus have endeavoured to prove that the message was not a mere pretext for gaining time. Never did a government so completely lose sight of that politic axiom recommended by our great philosopher: "First to watch, and then to speed; for the helmet of Pluto, which maketh the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the council and celerity in the execution; for when things are once come to execution, there is no secrecy comparable to

celerity; like the motion of a bullet in the air which fleeth so swift that it outruns the eye."

However skilfully worded, however well calculated the speech might have been to deceive at first sight, it soon became evident that the government was not sincere, and that it only wanted to gain time. Indeed, it had not sufficient address to mask its intentions, or to curb the impatience of its partisans. Already, in the sitting of the 15th, Mr. Donker Curtius lifted up the veil, and boldly threw down the glove of defiance." "Before all things," said he "the rebels must be made to return to order, and I see no other means of effecting this than by force."

It was evident, therefore, that whilst the government professed moderation, it was resolved not to make the slightest concession, and that it adhered to constitutional forms, because it felt assured that these very forms, would relieve it from the necessity of yielding. But its reliance was not so much upon the majority of the chambers, as in the force of its bayonets. It had determined that the sword should be the arbiter; and when the resources at its disposal are considered, it had every right to anticipate success.

The situation of the Belgic deputies at the Hague, was in the meanwhile both irksome and perilous. The exasperation of the lower orders was intense. The utmost exertions of the police could not always shield them from insult, and in some instances, even the better classes carried this antipathy so far as to refuse them shelter; so that more than one member was constrained to apply to the authorities in order to obtain lodging. Besides, they plainly perceived that their presence was useless; that their convocation was a mere delusion, and although it was not perhaps the direct intention of the government to employ measures of intimidation,

still they considered themselves in a state of obsession. Some amongst them calling to mind the projected plan of a movement at Brussels during the ordinary session in October, were not without apprehensions of anticipatory retaliation.

Although the whole of the Belgian deputies, excepting Baron Stassart, remained at the Hague, it was not without the most sinister forebodings. "The heavens are obscured," said one of them in a letter to a friend at Brussels; "dark clouds are gathering round us; the storm already menaces our heads. Belgians, be prepared for combat or slavery." These lines having found their way into the public journals, increased the general indignation. The government had evidently thrown down the glove; the people swore to cast away the scabbard.

It was in the midst of these inauspicious events, that the nuptials of the Princess Mariane, only daughter of the king, with the Prince Albrecht, youngest son of the Prussian monarch, were celebrated at the Hague. The union of this young and virtuous couple, which was solemnized on the evening of the 14th, still more strongly cemented those family ties that already so closely connected the courts of Berlin, Petersbourg, and the Netherlands. In former days, when the individual sympathies of monarchs were paramount to the welfare or interests of the people over whom they ruled, the conclusion of such an alliance, and at such an epoch, would have been looked on, not only as the well-digested result of political calculation, but as the immediate forerunner of active co-operation.

But, if the vicissitudes that have overtaken the Wasa, Bourbon, and Napoleon dynasties were insufficient to demonstrate the utter fallibility of family alliances, the Belgic revolution has furnished the most conclusive

proofs of the immense change that has been operated in the relative position of sovereigns and people, even in absolute states. Fortunately for the repose and happiness of nations, those times no longer exist, when the hymeneal torch of princes were but ensanguined firebrands destined to spread desolation over the face of kingdoms.

Ties of consanguinity no longer weigh in the balance, and among the many contradictory phenomena resulting from the Belgic struggle, there is nothing more striking than the intimate family connection existing between the two northern courts and that of the Hague, and the complete violation and abandonment by the two former of all those principles, of all those individualities that formerly linked all absolute sovereigns in one indissoluble knot. It matters little whether this be the result of necessity or of more enlightened policy; it is an immense step gained in civilization, and Europe now reaps the benefit of the progression.

In the meanwhile, the state of excitement in the provinces increased to an alarming extent. Civil war appeared inevitable. It was evident that nothing would now satisfy the nation but unconditional concession. The grievances were no longer thought of, they had merged in the demand for separation. Wherever the king's speech fell into the hands of the people, it was torn or burned, and its ashes cast to the winds that blew towards Holland, amidst deafening shouts of defiance. The daily press, which had now gained a complete ascendancy over the public mind, added fuel to the general flame, by the bitterness with which it commented all such passages of the discourse as were liable to wound the national susceptibilities.

A general cry of "to arms!" arose on every side. Volunteers poured into Brussels, not only from the ad-

jacent country, but from the most remote parts. The restless Wallons, with that adventurous daring which is their historical characteristic, abandoned their occupations, and eagerly seizing the pike and the musket, marched towards the centre of commotion. The Borains, like the dark spirits of the melo-drame, rose from their mines, and helter-skelter pushed upon the capital;* Limbourg subscribed her quota; the Flanders sent forth their tribute; Liege furnished arms and cannon, and a body of Wavrians with two field pieces reached the city; thus rallying under the Brabant banner a numerous band of hardy men, many of whom had bled at Jena, Austerlitz, and the Moskwa, or had crossed bayonets with the dreaded infantry of England, on the banks of the Tagus and Guadiana. It was these men with their reminiscences of Dantzic, Saragossa, Tariffa, and Badajos, that taught the Brusselers how to defend their hearths. Their lessons were not thrown away.

By an inconceivable derilection of foresight and common military vigilance, supplies of artillery, ammunition, arms, and provisions were allowed to pass unmolested by the royal troops, who, wherever they showed themselves, were insulted, scoffed at, or tempted to unite with their fellow-citizens. Whilst all was audacity and excitement on the part of the people, timidity and supineness marked the conduct of the royal commanders, who, apparently, had neither unity of plan or action. Detachments marched and countermarched, frittering away their force in partial movements, exhausting the spirit, and endangering the fidelity of the soldiers. Nay, so far did the generals carry their forbearance,

* "Borains" are the inhabitants of that part of Hainault in which are situated the collieries, so called from *bores*—wells; hence the colliers are all designated as Borains.

that a battalion of infantry having been ordered to reinforce the garrison of Leige citadel, Major-General Boecop thought proper to address a dispatch to the provincial governor, requesting him to assure the public that there was nothing hostile in this movement;—and yet the whole city lay at the mercy of his guns. But such was the system—the Dutch took up the pen, when they ought to have seized the sword, and hurled shells when they ought to have written dispatches.

In the midst of this general fever and excitement, the greatest alarm and disunion prevailed in Brussels, even among the members of the burgher-guard. Consequently, Baron Van der Smissen, the second in command, who was an object of suspicion to his colleagues and the people—suspicions in some measure justified by his subsequent conduct—gave in his resignation, and retired from the city. In fact, all the peaceable inhabitants dreaded a renewal of those incendiary scenes that had called them to arms on the 26th; whilst others, aware of the gradual advance of the prince's reinforcements, most anxiously desired to be freed from the host of strangers, who had no interests, no property at stake, and whose projected resistance, according to all human probability, would entail the bombardment and destruction of the city.

The only guarantee for the preservation of order and property, was the maintenance of the supremacy of the burgher-guard; for, with the exception of the paid substitutes, every individual in that corps was directly or materially interested in preventing outrage. The utmost efforts were, however, made to excite distrust, and to induce the populace to disarm this burgher-guard, whose fidelity to the common cause had become a subject of suspicion to the more exaggerated patriots. Every thing, therefore, depended on the countenance and firm-

ness of its chiefs and on that of the "commission of public surety." During the few days that the functions of the latter existed, they rendered the most essential services to the city. The devotion, activity, and moral courage displayed by General d'Hoogvorst, Count Felix de Mérode, Messrs. Rouppe, Gendebien, Van de Weyer, and Ferdinand Méeus, merited the highest encomiums. The latter of these respectable citizens, now governor of the bank, was ill-requited at a later period for his services. His noble mansion, situated near the Schaerbeek-gate, was first ransacked by the besieging troops, and then attacked by the misguided rabble, under the pretext of his being an Orangist. His property was destroyed; his splendid residence, with all its valuable contents, including an immense depôt of oil in the cellars and vaults, was committed to the flames, or pillaged by the populace. The scorched and crumbling ruins opposite the Botanical Gardens still point out the spot where this act of vandalism was committed—over which it would be a more pleasing duty to cast the veil of oblivion, even at the expense of screening from infamous notoriety the well-known instigators of this foul transaction.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARACTERS OF GENERAL D'HOOGVORST, COUNT F. DE MERODE, AND OTHERS—EMISSARIES DISPATCHED TO PRINCE FREDERICK—COUNCIL OF DELEGATES ASSEMBLED—ADDRESS FORWARDED TO THE BELGIC DEPUTIES AT THE HAGUE—POLITICAL UNIONS ESTABLISHED—DISSENSION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND CHIEFS OF THE BURGHER GUARDS—ALARM OF THE RESPECTABLE CITIZENS—SORTIES MADE BY THE VOLUNTEERS, WHO CAPTURE A PIQUET OF HORSE—THE POPULACE INVADE THE HÔTEL DE VILLE, AND MENACE THE LIVES OF THE COMMISSION—DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION—IT IS PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

It is a task of no ordinary difficulty to draw the character of our contemporaries, especially when the attempt is made by a stranger; but so little appears to be known of the real antecedents, character, or conduct of the citizens mentioned in the last page, and indeed of many others, that it almost becomes a duty to rectify some of those erroneous statements that have been circulated by designing and vindictive men.

The night of the 21st of August found Baron Emanuel d'Hoogvorst living tranquilly in the bosom of his family, in the utmost enjoyment of all the blessings that wealth and domestic happiness can confer. Endowed with a large fund of good sense, though without any striking or brilliant talents, being unambitious, averse to intrigue, and moderate in his politics; having for his motto, as M. Dupin admirably expresses it, "*sub lege libertas*," but not "*liberty or death*, whose li-

very is of blood," he was an enemy to those commotions that have revolution for their first element, and anarchy for their last result. Equally esteemed for his honourable character and frank cordiality, as he was proverbial for his philanthropic disposition, he was respected by his equals, a favourite with the middling classes, and highly popular with the lower orders. He had, however, never attempted to meddle in public affairs, or made himself conspicuous otherwise than by his unbounded benevolence—a virtue that his riches enabled him to practise to unusual extent.

It was the knowledge of this high reputation that pointed him out as a fit person to be placed at the head of the armed citizens. Couriers were, therefore, dispatched to him, both by the authorities and burghers; and, however reluctant he might have been to exchange his domestic tranquillity for the stormy and perilous honours that were forced upon him, he did not hesitate a moment between personal sacrifices and the hope of rendering service to his fellow-citizens. A better choice could not have been made, nor could any one more honourably and courageously have fulfilled the task imposed upon him. His fortune placed him above all suspicion of venality or self-interest; his well-known antipathy to anarchy and democracy protected him from any accusation of subversive principles; his proverbial integrity gave weight to his assertions; and his charity and open-hearted manners guaranteed his influence with that class which is the most to be dreaded during turbulent times —the great difficulty in such cases being not to discover a man capable of exciting, but one who has the art to restrain popular passions.

During twelve months of uncertainty and agitation, the safety and security of Brussels mainly depended on his exertions; and although it was impossible for him

or any friend of order to avert the partial excesses that broke out on more than one occasion, and which were the undoubted work of the political associations, yet he did every thing in the power of an honest man to place bounds to these vile excesses. Contented with the honorary distinction of general-in-chief of the civic guards, Emanuel d'Hoogvorst has retired into private life with unblemished reputation, and without having made a single enemy; a rare occurrence in the life of a public man, and a striking proof of his prudence and disinterestedness.

The conduct of Count Felix de Mérode, a descendant of one of the most ancient and noble families of Belgium, offers an instance of patriotism and self-abnegation not often encountered in revolutionary times. Though entitled by rank and fortune to a seat in the States-General, he had never aspired to that honour, nor taken any overt share in politics under the old government. Appertaining to the high Catholic party, of which he was one of the most zealous adherents; indignant at the vexations imposed, not only on his co-religionists, but on his countrymen in general, he had cordially entered into the spirit of the union, and lent all the weight of his influence to the petitioners; but being desirous to avoid all contact with the court and government, he either resided in the country or in France, where he had married a Grammont, and devoted himself to his domestic duties and the education of his family.

Chancing to be present at Brussels on the night of the 25th, and having much property at stake, he, with others of the nobility, instantly flew to arms, and was soon joined by his three brothers, Henry, Werner, and Frederick. The latter, a young man of great gallantry and military ardour, having enrolled himself in the corps of sharp-shooters raised by the Marquis of Chasteler,

was mortally wounded near the village of Berchem, whilst leading on a detachment of volunteers against the Dutch rear-guard, commanded by Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar.

Having no ties that bound him to the court; having never accepted any favour at the hands of the government; professing the most undisguised aversion, not only to Dutch supremacy, but to the king, whom he looked on as the representative of that system, De Mérode eagerly associated himself with the popular party, and from the first moment devoted himself to the emancipation of his country. Possessing immense influence with the clergy and lower orders, amongst whom the name of his family had long been proverbial for its piety and benevolence, he soon became the popular idol; and, had he been actuated by ambitious or interested views, he might have availed himself of this popularity to raise himself to the highest honours. But the fundamental principle on which he acted was the public good. All personal consideration merged in this one generous sentiment. The fumes of incense that rose around him never once diverted him from this object.

Being placed on the list of candidates for the regency, he opposed rather than sanctioned the selection; and, in fact, gave his support to Baron Surlet de Chokier. His name was also brought forward as a fit person to fill the throne; but the zeal with which he first advocated the election of the Duke of Nemours, and subsequently that of the present sovereign, plainly proved that he was not actuated by selfish motives.

Independent in rank, fortune, and character, not less inimical than d'Hoogvorst to revolutionary anarchy, Count Felix earnestly co-operated in the maintenance of order and the re-establishment of monarchical institutions. He vigorously opposed the republican projects of

those whose views were incompatible with the interests of his country, or the general tendency of European opinions; and whilst he did not conceal his aversion to the late Protestant monarch, he has served the present king with the utmost zeal and devotion; a proof that general systems, and not individual prejudices, formed the basis of his actions.

Though not exempt from failings, and certainly not possessing those brilliant talents or eloquence that are essential to constitute great men and orators, he commands the respect of the legislature and country; and although he may not have had the ability to strike out new political systems, he has had the good sense to adhere to those best calculated to benefit his country; an example worthy of imitation by others, who, with inferior powers, are carried away by superior pretensions. The principal defects laid to his charge are exaggerated, uncompromising Catholicism, and a fanatic antipathy to the house of Nassau. But, however rigid in his religious doctrines, he has constantly advocated tolerance and liberty; and, however inimical to the Nassau dynasty, he would willingly have tendered his allegiance to the Prince of Orange, had the voice of the nation called that prince to the throne.

The venerable M. Rouppe, one of the most wealthy and respectable citizens of the metropolis, and formerly a merchant of eminence, had been mayor of Brussels under the empire, during which time he had recommended himself to the people by his paternal administration, and his devotion to his magisterial duties. Indeed, he had given proofs of his independent spirit in a remarkable manner; for, having refused to put in force certain arbitrary measures, ordered by Napoleon's government, he was conveyed prisoner to Paris under an escort of gensdarmes, but succeeded not only in de-

precating the wrath of the emperor by the upright manlihood of his conduct, but in obtaining justice for his fellow citizens.

Having considerable property at stake, and the interest of many families in his hands, he was one of the last men to promote anarchy; but being deeply impressed with the injustice of the government, he was one of the first to demand a redress of grievances. He ardently desired to effect this without disorder, or without dissolving that dynastic link that connected the two countries. He did not hesitate a moment, therefore, to abandon the retreat in which he had lived during many years, and to accept the mission conferred upon him; not with the view of propagating misrule, but with that of bridling popular effervescence, or, at all events, of guiding it in a proper channel.

Possessing a reputation of undoubted probity; being an ardent friend of rational liberty, but an avowed enemy to excess, M. Rouppe brought the experience of his grey hairs, the weight of his unblemished character, and the influence of his general popularity to the council, and thus largely contributed to repress those scenes of violence and disorder which at that period threatened the most fatal results; for the meetings of the burgher-guard council and commission were often invaded by the exaggerated party, and became the arena of such fierce debates and fearful menaces, as required all the energy, influence, and presence of mind of more moderate men to resist.

Mayor of the city at the present hour, M. Rouppe has been recompensed for his zealous devotion to the liberty and welfare of the city, by the general respect of all classes of its inhabitants.

The individual of this body who combined more of those vigorous revolutionary elements that urge men to

the most daring extremes, was Mr. Alexander Gendebien. Sprung from a respectable Hainault family, and educated for the bar, at which he was an eloquent and successful practitioner, he possessed a numerous body of clients, over whom his talents and liberality in pecuniary matters had given him considerable influence. Having vowed an antipathy to the Dutch, not less rancorous than that which the Hannibræ swore to imperial Rome, he had long shown himself an uncompromising antagonist of the government, both by his writings and by the zeal with which he defended the liberties of the press.

Ardent, enthusiastic, and ambitious; carrying his liberal principles to the most unbounded extremes; clinging with ardour to those anti-European theories, so loudly vaunted by the votaries of "equality," but so fraught with danger and misery to the people, whom they pretended to benefit, he instantly embraced the popular cause with all the fervour of the most exalted imagination.

Openly professing democratic principles, he conscientiously believed in the practicability of those dangerous theories, which gradually seducing men from one excess to another, impel them first to overturn, then to wade through seas of blood in order to rebuild; and lastly, when the inevitable hour of reaction arrives, to entail chains on posterity, infinitely more galling than those which previously enthralled them. In despite of the almost universal tendency to monarchical institutions; in defiance of history and experience, he ardently cherished that system, which has destruction for its antecedent, blood and proscription for its concomitants, and despotism as its successor—a hideous climax!*

* In the French republican journal *La Tribune*, of the 12th of February, 1834, we find the following blasphemous and atrocious

Almost from the first moment that the separation was mooted, Mr. Gendebien turned his eyes to France; for he sincerely thought—and in this opinion he did not stand alone—that the most advantageous measure that could be adopted as regarded the material interests of Belgium, was its re-annexation to that country. Indeed, so far was he said to carry his opinions on this head, that he would rather have seen the adjunction of a part to France, than that the whole should continue in any way subject to Holland. Such a plan might have been excusable during a short period; but the tenacity with which he subsequently clung to its realization, not only proved that he miscalculated the strength of the republican or movement party in France, but that his views were not accordant with those off the vast mass of his countrymen, and that his sagacity as a politician was infinitely less profound than his skill as a jurist.

Even a superficial knowledge of the principles of European policy ought to have convinced him that a partition or reunion could only be purchased at the expense of a general war; and, however great his contempt of regular armies, had his suggestions been adopted, he would perhaps have shortly seen the bayonet of the stranger again sweeping across the country, in despite of those barricades and blouses in which he placed an overweening reliance.

However well adapted, by his austere probity, activity, vivid eloquence, personal courage, and devotion to liberty, to obtain an ascendency over the people in tempestuous

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profession of faith. After decrying the Protestant and Catholic religions as "obsolete," and their doctrines "good for nothing," it adds—"Revolutionary faith is the only religion for our age; its mass or its preachings are called propagand; its communion, association; its sacrifices and burnt offerings, the devotion of citizens to the common weal; *its baptism is the baptism of blood!*"

times, he was far from possessing the sterling qualities requisite for a legislator or statesman, when the swollen waters have subsided to their ordinary level. Impatient of contradiction, hasty in his expressions, and immoderate in his politics; subject to the most violent gusts of choler; mistaking vehemence of diction for force of argument, and invective for dialectic; too often deviating from those forms that are essential to the dignity and weight of parliamentary eloquence; being as unmalleable in spirit as he was energetic in expression; forgetting that in negociation the craft of the fox is frequently of more avail than the strength of the lion; constantly abandoning facts for persons, and allowing the better judgment to be overwhelmed by the whirlwind of his passions, he might be qualified for an accessory, but not for the leader of a party. Indeed, had his system been pursued; had the measures he advocated been adopted, all negociations would have been nearly impracticable. With the honest intention of sustaining national honour, he would have sacrificed national interests; and, through an erroneous policy, dignified with the name of energy, would have entailed as many misfortunes on the land he loved, as his extreme parliamentary, or rather unparliamentry, vehemence has tended to benefit the party he abhors.

Never perhaps did a man's private character present a more marked contrast to his public conduct. Generous and disinterested; eager both with purse and counsel to assist the needy or oppressed; a kind parent, a devoted friend, and a model of domestic virtue; mild in his manner, polished in his language, and temperate in his dealings, no man can stand higher in the estimation of his fellow-citizens. But the hurricane has not more terrible effects on the waters of the ocean, than politics on his susceptible temperament. Though an ornament

to private life and pre-eminent in his profession, Mr. Gendebien's public career has essentially disappointed the expectations of his countrymen, and proved that, in despite of his undoubted forensic talents and patriotism, he is not destined to rise above the common level, either as a statesman or politician.

Of the quintumvirate forming "the commission," the most talented and sagacious, the only one perhaps destined to arrive at political eminence by the single force of his own merit, was M. Sylvian Van de Weyer.

Only son of a highly respectable judge of Louvain, whose family during several generations had occupied honourable situations in the provincial magistrature, he had received a most careful and enlightened education. Combining rare intelligence with great application; possessing an intimate knowledge of modern languages and polite literature; being well versed in jurisprudence, philosophy, history, and the classics, he soon distinguished himself at the bar, and at an early age was appointed professor of philosophy at the museum of Brussels, and conservator of the city library, as well as that of the celebrated collection of Burgundian manuscripts, from which latter he was dismissed in consequence of his having acted as counsel to De Potter, on the trial of the latter, in 1830; though, on his joining the opposition in 1829, he had tendered his resignation, which had been refused by the government.

To a pleasing exterior and highly-polished manners, he added the most precious of all gifts for a politician or diplomatist—that is, the most absolute command over his temper, language and countenance. Endowed with a concise and nervous style of writing; gifted with more than ordinary facility of diction; having a voice peculiar for its harmony, a ready faculty of discovering the weak points in an adversary's argument, and great prompti-

tude of reply, he was as remarkable for the elegance as for the fluency of his parliamentry language. To these and other qualities essentially calculated to captivate the more enlightened classes, he united devoted patriotism and attachment to rational liberty, and the most perfect self-possession and presence of mind in moments of trying emergency. The skill with which he knew how to strike the right chord in addressing the people, and the knowledge he possessed of their wayward passions, gave him an immense ascendency over them, and thus enabled him to curb their violence at times the most critical to public safety. Ardently devoted to the interests of his country, he fought its battles, when none but brave men dared utter their sentiments; and, since its independence has been effected, no one has more largely contributed to its welfare at home, or to its respectability abroad.

At the period of the formation of "the commission," neither Van de Weyer, or any of his colleagues, had any fixed object beyond the hope of an administrative separation. But no sooner had the attack on Brussels decided the fate of the revolution, than he zealously adopted that line of policy advocated by M Lebeau and the moderate liberals, and which eventually rallied to its support the whole of the Catholic party. He had sagacity enough to discover two essential facts as regarded the system to be pursued: the one, that republicanism was anti-French and anti-European; the other, that a regenerated *isolated* Belgic monarchy was the only substitute that would be permitted to replace the falling throne of the *united* Netherlands.

A moment's consideration sufficed to demonstrate that the surest guarantee for Belgic safety was an intimate alliance between France and England; for whilst France would never consent to see Belgium invaded by Prussia, in order to favour Dutch restoration, Great

Britain would never patiently submit either to the annexation of the whole or any part to France, and would oppose, with all her energies, any encroachment tending to bring the French nearer the Rhenish provinces. If the independence of Belgium was of any moment, it was vitally important to avoid any act that might tend to cause a rupture between these two powers. So long as they acted in unison, notes might be exchanged, menaces put forth, ambassadors withdrawn, or direct negotiations refused; but there would be no armed intervention on the part of the northern powers. The result has proved the correctness of his provision.

Such may be considered the leading characteristics of the men whose power had completely susperseded that of the constituted authorities. And fortunate was it that these men, not only possessed influence, but an anxious desire to maintain tranquillity; for the internal condition of the city was most precarious. It was evident that there was an utter dissidence of interests and intents between the unreflecting, and still more reckless volunteers, who had not an obole of property at stake; and the peaceable householders, whose families and whole existence were at the mercy of their friends within, or liable to all the horrors of bombardment from enemies without.

With discordant songs or fierce shouts of, "arms! give us arms!" the one openly busied themselves in raising barricades, and making other defensive preparations, that appeared destined to entail inevitable destruction on the city; whilst the other were secretly attempting to deprecate the wrath of the government, and, if possible, to avert the dangers that menaced them. Meetings were consequently held by many of the most respectable and wealthy citizens. Addresses and emissaries were dispatched to Prince Frederick,

depicting the state of lawless anarchy in which they were plunged, earnestly imploring him to hasten to their relief, and assuring him that the instant his columns appeared before the city, the hordes of undisciplined volunteers would disappear, that the Orange standard would again be hoisted on the towers of St. Gudule, and that he and his soldiers would have a bloodless triumph, and be hailed as guardian angels. To these solicitations—to these delusive assurances may be attributed, in a great measure, all those subsequent disasters that led to the dissolution of the monarchy.

With a view of calming popular effervescence, or rather of bringing the question between the crown and people to an immediate issue, it was judged advisable to assemble a council of notables and delegates of sections. The object of this assembly was to draw up an address to the Belgian representatives at the Hague, urging them either to endeavour to obtain some immediate guarantee from the throne, or to quit Holland without a moment's delay.

After several hours of wild and stormy discussion, during which sundry violent propositions were made by the more exalted patriots, but triumphantly combatted by Felix de Mérode, Van de Weyer, and Baron Joseph d'Hoogvorst, an address was embodied, and, being carried unanimously, was forthwith forwarded to the Hague.

Annexed to this document was the following memorial, signed by a numerous body of provincial citizens. It may be taken as the essence of the address itself, divested of its political conclusions and strictures on the king's speech. "Having weighed and considered both the speech from the throne, and the danger of civil war, from hour to hour more imminent, as well as the constantly increasing distress and irritation of the com-

mercial and labouring classes, the undersigned inhabitants of Liege, &c. &c., supplicate their deputies to exert every effort to consecrate, without delay, the principle of separation, either through the address in reply to the king's speech, or by some other (public) act, and at the same time to demand the instant withdrawal of the Dutch troops stationed in the Belgic provinces. If these efforts fail to attain the only object by which tranquillity can be maintained in the southern provinces, the undersigned earnestly implore their deputies to return forthwith;"—an intention already announced by some of their colleagues.

The agents employed to convey these documents to the Hague, after a secret interview with some of the Belgic deputies, lost no time in returning to Brussels. The report made by them of the Dutch military preparations, of the little apparent chance of concession, and the painful situation in which the deputies were placed, added to the exasperation of the people, who already began to entertain suspicions of the good faith of the commission, and to question the intentions of the burgher-guard.

The establishment of political unions or clubs was consequently suggested as the only means of stimulating the drooping energies of the one, and of counteracting the power of the other, should they attempt to employ their influence against the people. After various discussions and preparatory meetings, Messrs. Rogier and Ducpetiaux, with several others, determined on the formation of an association, under the title of the "Central Union," which was installed on the 16th. Here, under the pretext of calmly discussing political questions, the most exaggerated principles were advocated, and the most violent measures proposed. As usual in all cases of civil commotion, one doctrine only

was admitted; all opposition to the popular will, no matter how just or politic, was declared to be anti-patriotic, and brought down on the speaker the dangerous epithets of traitor and Dutchman, for as yet the word Orangist was not adopted as a term of proscription.

Nothing could be more at variance than the conduct and views of the commission and burgher-guard council, and those of the leaders of the Central Union. The former, who held their sittings permanently at the Hôtel de Ville, employed every effort to restrain the populace from committing any outrage on the property of the citizens, or from any aggressive acts on the king's troops, that might authorize retaliation. In despite of the prevailing enthusiasm, and flattering assurances of fraternization received from the provinces, the members of the commission could not blind themselves to the dangers that menaced the capital, or the inadequacy of its defensive resources. Being for the most part fathers of families, having antecedents, property, and character at stake, they were not insensible to the fearful responsibility of entailing destruction on a beautiful city, and loss of life on thousands of innocent citizens, and this without any apparent chance of ultimate success. For it did not enter into the calculation of the most sanguine that an open town, commanded at various points from the adjacent heights, having only six pieces of artillery; without government, leaders, ammunition, or other defenders than a few thousand undisciplined rabble, partially furnished with fire-arms, could seriously attempt, much less successfully resist, an army of nearly 13,000 well-appointed troops, with thirty-two field-pieces, supported by reserves and detachments, destined to maintain its own communications, and to cut off those of the besieged with the provinces.

The latter, that is the Central Union, which assembled at the Salle St. George, excited every nerve to augment the fermentation among the lower orders, and to inspire them with contempt for the tempest whose menacing thunders were growling around. Impelled by the most reckless daring, or guided by a species of political instinct, denied to more moderate men, they loudly declared their utter contempt for the Dutch troops, proclaimed victory as certain, and appeared to desire collision as ardently as the commission were anxious to avoid it. Indeed, there were some amongst them who, comparing the populace to a mastiff, openly stated that if the burghers were lukewarm and inclined to treachery, the only means of bringing them to their senses, was "*to unmuzzle Picard*," meaning that an attempt should be made to renew those scenes of pillage and incendiarism, that had already brought so much odium on their cause.

Although no internal excess took place, these discourses were not lost on the volunteers. So confident and bold had the latter became, that they abandoned the covert of their barricades, and hazarded two expeditions into the country—the one within sight of the royal outposts at Vilvorde, and the other to Terveuren, where they expected to surprise a detachment of cavalry. The first one terminated as it was proposed, in a simple reconnaissance, and the other in their carrying off the arms and horses of a picquet of gensdarmes, stationed at the latter village. As usual, these enterprises were effected without the slightest opposition on the part of the king's forces; those vigilant and prudent soldiers, relying on the assurances of their partisans in the city, thought it useless to take any extraordinary military precautions. Having an over-abundance of cavalry, horse-artillery, and men of all arms at their disposal,

they might have dashed forward, and, surrounding the adventurous detachments, driven the one into the Vilvorde canal with the flats of their swords, or cut down or captured the other as it debouched from the woods near Terveuren. But no! with a noble magnanimity they permitted themselves to be bearded by two or three hundred rabble on foot, and consoled themselves with the anticipated triumph which they expected to achieve at the mere expense of a proclamation.

No sooner were these two unauthorized sorties made known to the "commission of surety," than a spirited proclamation was issued, denouncing such acts as "subversive of all discipline—as a violation of the rights of man—as calculated to expose the citizens to all the unhappy consequences of an attack, which they did not wish to provoke;" and further directing the horses to be restored forthwith, and stating "that a letter had been written to Prince Frederick, disavowing the infraction, and announcing the reparation." This incident, though trifling in itself, produced results that quickly reduced the city to the last stage of anarchy.

The proclamation, which was in every point prudent, just, and accordant with the professions of the burgher-council, ill-suited the lawless pretensions and fiery temperament of the volunteers and leaders of the Central Union, who, emboldened by this fresh success, were more confident and more adverse than ever to all conciliation. It was considered as an ungrateful requital of their prowess, and an insult to national honour. For, it must be observed, that on every occasion, not only then, but up to the latest period, "national honour" has always been put forward by the exaggerated party, either as a stimulus to excite the masses, or as a pretext for every act, no matter how incoherent or im-

politic. The proclamation was, therefore, torn from the walls, and every means taken to depopularize its authors.

On the 19th, the day on which this document was published, the popular fermentation appeared to have reached its climax. Groups of sinister-looking individuals filled the streets, at first confining themselves to mere murmurs; but as the evening approached, and their numbers augmented, their outcries became louder, and at length broke forth into the most menacing vociferations. As the night closed in, the square of the town-hall was choked with dense masses of the lowest rabble, exclaiming, "We are betrayed and sold! Down with the commission! Down with the burgher-guard!" Other bands not less numerous, surrounded the meeting-place of the Central Union, whose members they greeted with cheers or cries for arms.

The city seemed on the verge of some terrible catastrophe. Before midnight, upwards of 10,000 of the populace had assembled in the front of the town-hall, uttering the most fearful menaces. At length after several unsuccessful efforts, a body of several hundred forced the doors, and rushing through the passages with wild outcries, burst open the chamber in which the commission and burgher-council held its sittings. The hour of the night, the partial darkness, the disordered costumes and fierce countenances of the assailants, brought to mind the frightful scenes of the convention. Fortunately, the most influential of the council still retained their courage and presence of mind. Opposition was useless, the only thing left was to flatter and promise. These means were so successfully employed, that after an hour the storm subsided, and the populace retired.

On the following day, however, the same scenes were

renewed, accompanied by acts of greater violence. The town-hall was again invaded, and the populace having discovered the depôt of Orange cockades, which had been put by and forgotten since the morning of the prince's entry, were about to reek their vengeance on the "traitorous" members of the commission, when the presence of mind and self-possession of M. Van de Weyer again appeased their wrath, and succeeded in convincing them that these cockades were but the remnant of those worn by the communal-guard. It would be superfluous to follow the various details of this epoch of alarm and confusion. Suffice it to say, that scarce a vestige of the moral influence of the burgher-guard remained, that many of the piquets and posts occupied by them had been disarmed by the populace, and that the city was in fact at the mercy of the volunteers and people.

Although the utter hopelessness of attempting to oppose the overwhelming force under the prince's orders fully justified the caution of the commission of surety, as well as the fears of the peaceable inhabitants, there was much to palliate the enthusiasm of the people. From abroad the accounts were most exciting. Almost all Europe seemed to sympathize for a moment in the revolutionary spirit. Brunswick had risen, and driven from its walls the hot-headed and imprudent youth that seemed to have rejected from his heart and mind every characteristic that could give him any resemblance to the race of heroes from whence he sprang. Dresden had deposed its monarch; Hesse and Hanover were in a state of internal commotion; Baden was replete with agitation; the whole of Italy was ripe for revolt, and the plains of unhappy Poland were again about to be drenched with the blood of its valiant but imprudent martyrs.

In the Belgian provinces there was an universal sympathy for the capital. Emissaries arrived with offers of assistance and fraternization. Revolutionary committees were established in all the principal towns. The people of Liege, reckless of danger, had escaladed and carried the fort of the "Chartreuse," without its garrison firing a shot, and had moreover intercepted a convoy of stores and treasure, dispatched from Maestricht for the use of the citadel, after putting to the rout a strong escort under the orders of Major-general Daine. Mons was in open insurrection, and the king's troops, after a slight demonstration, had given way and retreated to the citadel, abandoning gates, ramparts, and artillery to the people. Namur was in a similar condition. Louvain held the Dutch detachments at bay, and thus intercepted their communications by the high roads of Tongres and Diest. In short, the mine was every where prepared for explosion; and ere many days all that line of noble fortresses, raised as bulwarks against the accumulated art, discipline, military science, and immense resources of France, fell at the mere apparition of a few ill-disciplined volunteers.

By the afternoon of the 20th, the commission and burgher-guard council might be considered as no longer in existence. All remaining power had passed into the hands of the Central Union and the chiefs of the volunteers. But even these were not so blinded to the dangers of perpetuating anarchy and leaving the city at the disposal of the people, as not to feel the urgent necessity of forming some species of government, and this without a moment's delay. Being now determined to resist to the last moment, all those considerations of policy and delicacy that influenced the sections in the selection of a title, no longer interfered. The term "provisional government" was therefore unhesitatingly

adopted. The only difficulty was the choice of its members.

In order to sound public opinion, and pave the way for the execution of this project, Mr. Rogier, after consulting some of the patriots of the Central Union, directed the preparation of a banner, inscribed with the words "*Provisional Government.—De Potter, Gendebien, and D'Oultremont (Count) of Liege.*" Then placing this standard in the hands of his volunteers, he called them to arms, and continued parading the streets with drums beating until nightfall, and thus prepared the people for a similar notice, which was affixed to the walls on the following day.

This announcement had no immediate result, for De Potter had not yet quitted Paris, M. Gendebien left the city before the arrival of the Dutch troops, and D'Oultremont remained at Liege. But it had the effect of preparing the nation for the establishment of that government which continued to preside over the destinies of the country from the day preceding the retreat of the royal troops, until the establishment of the regency.

CHAPTER XVI.

MORE EMISSARIES ARRIVE AT PRINCE FREDERICK'S HEAD-QUARTERS—H. R. H. DECEIVED BY THEM—DESPATCHES A COURIER TO THE HAGUE, WHENCE HE RECEIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION, AND TO ADVANCE ON THE CITY—PLAN OF ATTACK—COMMAND OF THE ARMY INTRUSTED NOMINALLY TO LIEUT.-GENERAL TRIP—IMPOLICY OF PRINCE FREDERICK'S ACCOMPANYING THE ARMY—ENTHUSIASM OF THE POPULACE ON HEARING THAT THE ROYAL ARMY IS ADVANCING—MUSTER OF THE ARMED FORCE—D'HOOGVORST RESIGNS THE COMMAND, IS REPLACED BY COUNT VANDERMEERE, AND AFTERWARDS BY VAN HALEN—THE DUTCH ARMY APPROACHES THE WALLS—SURRENDER TALKED OF, BUT THE VOLUNTEER CHIEFS DETERMINE TO DEFEND THE CITY TO THE LAST—ATTACK AND REPULSE—AMOUNT OF LOSS ON BOTH SIDES.

WHILST these events were passing at Brussels, where the people were actively employed in preparing for the most desperate defence, emissaries continued to arrive at Prince Frederick's head-quarters, bringing assurances of the pacific disposition of all the respectable citizens, and declaring themselves authorized to assert that the royal troops had but to present themselves before the town, and that they would be hailed with acclamations. Such, they affirmed, was the state of anarchy and disunion amongst the leaders of the revolt, that both barricades and volunteers would vanish on the slightest demonstration of force; and that the burgher-guard, eager for the restoration of tranquillity, would make a diversion in favour of the government. So that the rebels, taken between two fires, would have no alternative but to fly, or surrender at discretion. Nay, so far were these assurances carried, that it was recommended to leave unobstructed the roads conducting to Hal, An-

derlecht, and Ninove, in order to afford the misguided volunteers and peasantry an opportunity of escaping, without the necessity of coming into collision with the royal detachments.

Not only were the most respectable names cited, in addition to those affixed to the letters and addresses sent to the prince, but in several instances the rank and social position of the messengers were such as to give the greatest weight to their asseverations. When these personages, more than one of whom held office about the court, were subsequently tasked with having misled (it might be said betrayed) the prince, they attempted to exculpate themselves by declaring, "that Prince Frederick ruined all by his own dilatory, vacillating conduct; that if he did intend to strike a blow, he should have done so before the city was filled with strangers, and before both commission and burgher-guard had lost all influence; and that they never could suppose the Dutch generals would permit supplies of cannon, arms, and ammunition to enter the city. Besides, they never meant to imply that they, or any other citizens, would compromise their lives and properties by openly espousing the royal cause. All they intended to convey to the throne was their own protestations of loyalty, and the vows of the well-disposed for the re-establishment of legitimate authority. The only assurances they had proposed offering were those of immediate co-operation, so soon as the volunteers and strangers should be expelled, and the city restored to order." That is to say, they were ready to reap all the benefits without incurring any of the risks; and that, when all peril for themselves was passed, they would have been the first to aid the authorities in falling upon those whom they had neither heart to join nor courage to resist.

But this unfortunately was not the only instance in

which the same personages betrayed a want of discretion and energy most fatal to the cause of the house of Nassau. This was but the prelude to that series of deceptions, and absence of all prudence and vigour, that marked their conduct up to the latest period. The leading characteristics of this party may be summed up in a few words. Prodigal of intrigues and promises, they were avaricious of their purses and persons. Deceiving themselves as to their own influence, they deluded others as to the extent of their resources. Having no real attachment to the soil of their forefathers, and treating their native land as a mere change-house, they denied all patriotism to the rest of its inhabitants. Mistaking the hollow echo of their own voices for that of the respondent people, they talked loudly when silence and secrecy were essential, and were silent when the royal cause stood most in need of their votes and eloquence. They retreated when advance was necessary, and advanced, or rather *urged others forward*, when progression was destruction. Bold in the council, but timid at the moment of action, they showed themselves when their absence was unimportant, and were never forthcoming when their presence was most required. Of the whole body, there were scarcely two that would have ventured a hair of their heads, or the smallest coin of their hoards, in support of the cause to which they boasted an unbounded devotion. Yet such were the persons on whom the King of the Netherlands, the Prince of Orange, and even the British government for some time, relied, as fit instruments to restore the crown to the Nassau family!

Yielding too easily to these reiterated solicitations, and placing too much confidence in the assurances of co-operation so lavishly made by the emissaries from Brussels, Prince Frederick dispatched a courier to the Hague on the 19th, where the reports forwarded by his

royal highness were found to coincide with the representations of several members of the States-General, especially of the first chamber, who earnestly entreated the king to lose no time in making some military demonstration, that might afford the well-disposed inhabitants of Brussels an opportunity of pronouncing themselves in the royal favour. On the receipt of these dispatches, a cabinet council was held forthwith, and although the military preparations were not considered complete, and although it was certainly not the intention of government to effect any immediate change in the position of the advanced troops, a proclamation was instantly drawn up, and forwarded to Prince Frederick, together with unlimited powers to act as might best suit his discretion, or rather that of Lieutenant-General Constant, the chief of the staff.

As resistance was possible, notwithstanding the contrary assurances received from Brussels, the king deemed it prudent to take measures to shield Prince Frederick from the odium that might attach to the effusion of blood. The command of the active army was, therefore, entrusted to Lieutenant-General Trip; an ineffectual precaution, for his royal highness judging it expedient to remain with the head-quarters, he was held responsible by the nation for all the evils that ensued, and thus imprudently drew down upon his own shoulders the whole disgrace of the failure and accumulated hatred of the people, whilst Trip's name was scarcely heard of beyond the squadrons he commanded. It is not possible to attribute this unfortunate arrangement to other motives than excess of zeal and overweening confidence on the part of the prince; but, whatever might be the issue of the expedition, it was highly important for him to remain at Antwerp. In the event of success, he might have hastened forth-

with to the capital, at the request of a deputation, which would or ought to have been sent to invite him, and he should then have arrived to forgive, not to avenge. In case of defeat, he would have saved his own reputation as a soldier, and that which was of greater importance, the interests of his family, by casting the whole odium on those actually in command. For there never was a moment when it was more vitally important for every member of the dynasty to avoid any act calculated to enfeeble that tottering edifice, which stood on the verge of a fathomless abyss. To be withheld by scruples of delicacy to individuals, when kingdoms are at stake, may be a proof of justice and generosity, but it is an incontestible evidence of political weakness.

The proclamation ought to have been issued in the king's name, and General Trip should have been held responsible for its execution. If blood was destined to flow, it was absurd to suppose that Prince Frederick could accompany the head-quarters, and escape the moral consequences. But why accompany it? How could his presence benefit the army? The troops, if judiciously employed, were fully sufficient to ensure success, and his royal highness stood as little in need of the glory of the achievement, as the soldiers of any extraneous stimulant. Besides, what glory could be reaped in such a struggle? Yet if he could not glean honour, he might find disgrace, and this the dynasty could ill afford. Victory could bring with it no credit to the prince, but defeat might and did cause the most irretrievable moral misfortunes to his house. It is true that at the moment the troops were put in motion, success was not doubted. But this in no way diminishes the impolicy of the act, it merely proves the delusion under which the government laboured, and

the utter impuissance of those on whom they relied for co-operation.

On the return of the courier from the Hague to Antwerp, on the night of the 20th, a council of war was instantly summoned. The proclamation being laid before it and approved of, it was printed and distributed before daylight on the 21st.* It is evident that this document was drawn up, not only under the conviction of the royal troops obtaining a bloodless triumph, but that it was founded on these deceptive assurances, too promptly accredited by Prince Frederick and the government. In fact, it shews that the military operations were based on the solicitations and erroneous representations of men, not one of whom had the slightest intention of being forthcoming in the hour of need. This important proclamation merits serious attention. It furnishes a solution, though not an apology, for the plan of attack so pertinaciously adhered to by the Dutch commanders. This plan, attributed to General Constant, having been submitted to the council of war, orders were issued on the 21st to the troops in the rear of Vilvorde to close upon their respective advances, so as to form nearly a half-circle round the city, having their outposts at about two hours' march from Brussels; the left leaning on the Ghent road, near the village of Zellich, the centre in front of Evers and Dighem, and the right extending to the Cortenberg chaussée, above Woluve. On the same day the head-quarters and reserves moved to Malines.

The force thus concentrated amounted altogether to about 12,000 effective infantry, 1,600 horse, and 40 field-pieces. Of these 1,500 foot, 400 cavalry, and eight field-pieces were destined to move on Louvain, thus leav-

* See Appendix, No. 15.

ing about 10,500 foot, 1,200 horse, and four brigades of eight guns each, one of which was horse artillery, disposable for Brussels. In the meantime, a strong corps, under the orders of Lieut.-General Cort-Heyligers, debouched from Eindhoven by Hasselt on Tongres and St. Trond, menacing both Liege and Louvain.

The object of the Dutch commanders being to obtain possession of the upper part of the city of Brussels, which from its elevated position may be considered the key or citadel of the whole, the following dispositions were made.

On the extreme right, four squadrons of hussars, with a battalion of infantry, and a demi-battery, under the orders of Colonel Van Balveren, were to advance by the Ghent road on the Flanders-gate, and either to occupy the suburbs, or enter the city, as circumstances should require. The right centre column, consisting of two battalions, two squadrons, and a demi-battery, under Major-General Fauvage, following the Vilvorde chaussée, to make a feint on the Laaken-gate, in order to divert the attention of the besieged from the main attacks; but, in case of encountering any serious obstacles, to leave half a battalion and the guns for the protection of the Laaken-bridge, and then, moving by its left, to fall in as a reserve to the left centre. The latter, composed of two battalions of grenadiers and one of chasseurs (guards), with six battalions of infantry, and twelve field pieces, under Major-Generals Schuurman and Bylandt, debouching from the villages of Dighem and Evers, to force the Schaerbeek-gate, near the Botanical Garden, and thence to penetrate into the Park. The left column, principally composed of cavalry, with one battalion and four six-pounders, under Lieut.-General Trip, with Major-Generals Post and Boreel, to throw itself on the Louvain-gate, and having made good its entrance, to move rapidly by the boule-

vards and rue Ducale, and to establish itself in column on the open spaces near the walls of the king's palace and the Namur-gate. The reserves, consisting of three battalions, advancing along the outer rampart, as far as the Prince of Orange's palace, to throw a bridge over the narrow ditch at this spot, and to form on the boulevards, so as to keep open the communications with the exterior, and to furnish supports to the interior. The reserve battery, formed of the eight howitzers taken from the four brigades, to place itself in position on the elevated ground immediately fronting the temporary bridge. Detachments of cavalry to patrole the adjacent heights, and maintain connection between the columns. The Schaerbeek and Louvain gates being carried, and all intervening obstacles removed, the whole to make a rapid movement of concentration on the parks, palaces, and Place Royale, and there to wait until arrangements were effected for taking possession of the different piquets and guards in the heart of the city. *The most rigorous orders for the maintenance of discipline* accompanied their instructions. Two hours were considered amply sufficient for the completion and success of all these dispositions, so that, supposing the troops to arrive before the gates at seven A.M., it was calculated that the whole of the operations would be terminated, and the city restored to tranquillity, before mid-day. In the meantime, a corps under Major-General Trip was directed to move from Malines on Louvain, whilst another, consisting of about 2,000 men, with six guns, under Major-General Everts, was ordered to detach itself from the division of Cort-Heyligers, and, traversing Tirlemont, to menace Louvain from the side of Bautersem.

Even supposing that a perfect understanding had been established between the royal troops and citizens, and

that the Dutch commander was confident that all opposition would terminate at the gates, it is highly questionable whether the foregoing plan should have been adopted. So long as there existed a chance of resistance, however trifling, it was essential to avoid all unnecessary effusion of blood, and to spare the lives of the troops. One of the most important duties of a commander, however much he may despise an enemy, is to be prepared as much as possible against the "frictions" of war, and having taken every precaution to guard against reverses, then to think of securing victory at the least possible sacrifice to human life. But in this instance, the Dutch generals acted as if the blood of their soldiers was of no value, or rather, as if disaster was impossible. They neglected availing themselves of the advantages at their disposal during the first attack, and failed to adopt the commonest precautions that were called for subsequently. This will be shewn presently.

The prince's proclamation not being published in the *Gazette des Pays Bas*, until the evening of the 22d, was little known to the lower orders. Indeed, no effort seems to have been made to give it currency. Those at whose instigation and on whose representations it had been founded, dreaded its publicity, lest they should be compromised by its allusions to the wishes of the well-disposed citizens, and the co-operation of the burgher-guard and commission: whilst those who had resolved on resistance to the very knife, feared its discouraging effects on the people, on whom they solely relied for support. The advance of the royal troops was, however, quickly known by the inhabitants; and, although the members of the "commission of surety" and the greater part of the burgher-guard council had retired from the city, the populace, far from being discouraged, seemed to acquire new energy and excitement.

The barricades were multiplied in every direction; the streets were unpaved; stones, lime, blocks of granite, timber, and every other species of missile, was conveyed to the summits of the houses, for the purpose of being showered upon the assailants. A review of the burgher-guard, or rather of the armed force, was ordered, and about 3,000 men, provided with fire-arms, mustered in the Grande Place. Of these, about 800 were Brussels volunteers, under Gregoire, Borremans, Mellinet, Rodenbach, and Niellon; and about 400 Liegers under Rogier. Baron d'Hoogvorst having declined the responsibility of commanding the active forces, on the grounds of his little conversancy with the art of war, the eight sections selected Count Vandermeere, but he was quickly superseded by Van Halen.

Scarcely had this review terminated, ere some peasantry from the neighbouring villages arrived in the city, announcing the rapid advance of the king's troops, whose outposts were stated to be within gun-shot of the suburbs. In an instant the most fearful scene of confusion and disorder ensued. Doors and windows were closed: the inhabitants in the vicinity of the gates abandoned their dwellings, or prepared to take refuge in their cellars: the drums beat to arms, and the heavy monotonous clang of the tocsin from St. Gudule, re-echoed by those from all the minor churches, added to the uproar: men, women, and children, were seen hurrying to and fro, with screams of terror or shouts of defiance. Many who deemed themselves excluded from hope of amnesty, fled the city. An attack was instantly expected, and, with the exception of two or three thousand reckless men, the rest of the inhabitants held it madness to resist. The idea of an open town, with no other defenders than a few undisciplined volunteers, and little other ammunition than paving-stones, being

able to oppose such a force as was marching against them, seemed the climax of desperation to every reasonable mind.

The commission being dissolved, and its members having sought security in the country, the direction of the defence, indeed the whole authority, now rested with the chiefs of the volunteers, whose confidence and temerity seemed to rise in proportion to the dangers of the crisis. Not satisfied with defensive preparations, they collected a body of some 1,500 men, and then dividing them into three detachments, determined to sally forth to attack the royal troops. One party, with two cannon, taking the Ghent road, fell in with the Dutch vedettes on the heights, in front of the village of Zellich, and having exchanged a few rounds, withdrew, fearing to be enveloped by the cavalry; but the two detachments that issued by the Schaerbeek and Louvain gates, having encountered the enemy's outposts in front of Dighem and Evers, threw themselves into the enclosures, and, under cover of the banks, hedges, and trees, commenced a heavy tirailleur fire, which they maintained until nightfall. A part of this irregular band having advanced too far, was charged by the Dutch cavalry, who succeeded in capturing a considerable number. But, with this exception, these skirmishes terminated with trifling loss on either side.

It is essential to remark, that on this occasion the aggression was wholly and solely on the part of the people, and that the first blood having been spilled by them, the rules of war perfectly justified the severest reprisals. But, admitting that Prince Frederick was disincline to retaliate with all the severity that his overwhelming force permitted and the law would have justified, it was his duty to have taken warning from this very aggression, and to have seen the fallacy of expecting sub-

mission from a city, which, so far from being disposed to fraternize with his troops, had the temerity to send forth its detachments to attack them in the open country. It mattered little whether the volunteers were led on by foreigners or natives; it was evident that their leaders were full of energy and daring, and a prudent general would instantly have regulated his plan of operations, so as to be prepared for the most unfavourable chances.

Emboldened by the impunity with which they had been allowed to retire on the preceding evening, day had scarcely dawned on the 22d, ere the drums again beat to arms, and a body of volunteers, amounting to nearly 1,000, made a second sortie, and finding the troops nearly in the same positions, renewed the skirmish, and at length retired without any attempt bein made to molest their retreat, though it would have been an easy matter to have enveloped and annihilated the whole. If the prince had no serious intention of attacking the city, his forbearance was comprehensible; but, as his royal highness had the firm determination to make good his entry by force, it is inconceivable that he should have allowed himself to be attacked and insulted day after day by the disorderly bands, who, with more courage than prudence, ventured to pluck his very beard. But so many fatal errors were committed, that it is a matter of difficulty to discover a single instance undeserving of censure. Never was a good game so fearfully mismanaged by the players, and never were the lives of brave men so wantonly exposed through the unskilful tactic of their commanders; for those who imagine that the troops were lacking in courage, commit a grievous error. Men and officers, both Dutch and Belgian, gallantly did their duty. The whole responsibility of the failure must rest, not with the soldiery, but with the chiefs.

Notwithstanding the ardour of the volunteers, the greatest discouragement pervaded the city. Many even of the most exaggerated patriots, on the departure of the commission and dissolution of the burgher-guard, began to compare the inadequacy of their defensive resources with those of the attack, and, therefore, deemed it high time to attempt negotiating with Prince Frederick. Capitulation was anxiously desired, but the dread of being accused of treachery sealed every tongue. At length, M. Edward Ducpetiaux, eager to avert the misfortune that menaced the city, took on himself the responsibility of proceeding to the royal head-quarters. The object of his mission was to open the prince's eyes to the fallacy of all assurances of co-operation; to endeavour to convince him, that the only chance of entering without resistance, was to offer a general amnesty, and to urge his royal highness to retract such portions of the proclamation as regarded strangers, which, of course, included the provincial volunteers, and having obtained this concession, to negotiate for an armistice.

On presenting himself at the royal outposts, Ducpetiaux, who was noted as one of the most ardent patriots and most active leaders of the revolt, was instantly seized, and despite of his urgent demand to be taken before the prince, was conveyed prisoner to Antwerp without being permitted to fulfil the object of his mission. An unfortunate circumstance; for had the interview taken place, it is possible that he might have convinced Prince Frederick of the danger of expecting assistance from the citizens, and that some terms of accommodation might have been agreed upon that would have furnished a pretext for that submission which was so generally desired.

So disheartened were the vast majority at this moment, that even some of the Liege volunteers under Rogier

withdrew, and it was judged advisable to hold a meeting of chiefs and leaders at the town-hall, at six P. M. on the 22d, in order to discuss the expediency of defence or surrender. On this occasion, opinions were extremely divided. Many, and the most prudent, declaring that resistance must entail destruction, opined for submission; but their voices were drowned amidst the negative shouts of the people; whilst Gregoire, Niellon, and Mellinet, Frenchmen without an atom of property at stake, and Roussel, of Louvain, a violent democrat, swore that they would defend the city though they buried themselves in its ruins. After a strong discussion, the assembly broke up, and resistance was decided upon; the most ardent patriots retiring to harangue and encourage the people, and the more moderate to take precautions for the security of their families. Later, however, in the night, the solicitations of the merchants, tradesmen, and wealthy inhabitants became so pressing, that a second meeting was held, and the most violent leaders being absent, it was *unanimously* resolved that defence was impracticable and submission inevitable. A petition, or address to this effect, signed by forty notables, was drawn up at midnight, and forwarded to Prince Frederick.

But these pacific resolutions were rendered utterly nugatory by the adventurous conduct of the people; who, without waiting for leaders or instructions, enthusiastically seized their arms, and at day-break on the morning of the 23d, instinctively rushed to the points most exposed to the assaults of the enemy. From this moment until the night of the 26th, they continued the struggle without unity or instructions, and without any of the essentials most requisite for defence; and what is more remarkable, in despite of the wishes of the immense majority of the inhabitants.

In the meantime, intelligence of all that had passed during the preceding twenty-four hours, was conveyed to Prince Frederick; and although he was desirous to await the co-operation of some more distant detachments, he immediately issued orders for the simultaneous advance of the four columns, which were directed to reach the gates at seven, A. M., on the 23d, and to commence the attack according to the plan already detailed. These instructions were executed in the following manner.

The right column, having the whole of its cavalry in front—a strange inversion of the ordinary rules of attack—traversed the suburbs, and reached the Flanders-gate without difficulty. Meeting with no opposition, and concluding that no resistance would be offered, the commander imprudently pushed forward; but scarcely had the whole body penetrated into the narrow and tortuous streets, that leads from the bridge over the Charleroy canal towards the centre of the city, than they were suddenly assailed with a deluge of stones, quick-lime, burning cinders, and boiling water, accompanied by a most destructive fire of musketry from the cellars, attics, and loop-holes of the houses. Death and confusion instantly spread through the ranks of the hussars, who, falling back on the infantry, bore down the latter in their retreat; and the whole, after a gallant, but vain struggle, during which several brave officers and men perished or were taken prisoners, were driven back in disorder, and were well pleased to shelter themselves behind their guns, which had fortunately been left in position on the outside the canal.

General Fauvage, commanding the right centre, executed his instructions with greater prudence. Having closely reconnoitered the Laaken gate, and finding it secure from a *coup de main*, he merely exchanged a few shots with its defenders; then directing a half-bat-

talion and three guns to maintain the passage over the canal at the end of the Alée Verte, he threw a bridge over the Senne, contiguous to this spot, and making a left flank movement, joined the main body in front of the Schaerbeek-gate.

This was the point selected for the grand attack. Here the *élite* of the army was assembled under the immediate eyes of Prince Frederick and Lieutenant-general Constant de Rebecque. But so little did they anticipate any serious resistance, or so desirous was the prince to avoid first aggression, that the lieutenant-general, accompanied by a knot of staff-officers, preceded the advancing column, and rode up in the direction of the gate, expecting so be greeted with those shouts of loyalty and submission promised by the forty persons who signed the address of the previous night. They were, however, quickly awakened from this error by a volley from the neighbouring barricades. In an instant the columns opened, a battery of six field-pieces was unmasked, and the work of slaughter commenced. The outer defences being quickly carried, the artillery turned its attention to the gate itself; but its entrenchments being found sufficiently strong to resist the fire of the field-guns, and its defenders maintaining a galling discharge of musketry, and being flanked by that from the adjacent houses, the pioneers were directed to demolish the sunken wall in the ditch to the left of the lodges.

A passage being thus effected, the brigade of grenadiers and chasseurs, covered by the fire of two battalions and four field-pieces stationed on the terrace of the Botanical Garden, made good their lodgment on the boulevard, and thus turned the barricade, whilst the guns enfiladed the whole of the streets in front, up to the very perystile of the church in the Place Royale.

After a sharp struggle, these troops gallantly threw themselves into the rue Royale; then advancing with ported arms, and at double-quick time, they swept all before them, penetrated into the park, and immediately took possession of the adjacent palaces. This service was not effected without considerable loss; the advancing column having, as it were, to run a gauntlet of fire from the instant it entered the rue Royale until it reached the shelter of the park. A second brigade of infantry having entered at the same passage with the intention of executing a similar manœuvre, was repulsed, and compelled to follow the more circuitous route of the boulevards, suffering severely in their progress.

After halting a short time on the heights of St. Josse-ten-Noode, near the cemetery on the Louvain Chaussée, and thence cannonading the gate, Lieutenant-general Trip, at the head of the left column, advanced at a rapid pace through the suburb, and meeting with little opposition, easily removed the barricades, and, with triumphant shouts, galloped towards the posts assigned to him. At the same time the reserve, filing along the outer road, immediately proceeded to construct the bridge across the ditch, whilst the howitzer-battery took up a position behind the crest of the old glacis, directly in its rear.

Thus, before ten o'clock, the whole of the main attacks had fully succeeded, and the royal troops were in possession of the parks, palaces, and States-General, the gates of Schaerbeek, Louvain, and Namur, the whole of the intervening ramparts and suburbs from Etterbeek on the left, to those of Mollenbeek on the right. But here their victorious progress terminated. Sanguinary as the previous struggle had been, the task before them, if it was to be accomplished according to

the plan hitherto laid down, offered a still more bloody prospect. It was evident that the populace, though forced to abandon the gates, were resolved to dispute every inch of ground, and to fight from room to room, from house to house. To expect submission from them, of assistance from the citizens, was the climax of delusion. Nothing was more alien to the intentions of one or the other; and yet so generally was the capture of the city anticipated, that, with the exception of D'Hoogvorst and Baron F. Coppin,* almost every individual of note had hastily abandoned its walls. Even the Liege volunteers under Rogier had withdrawn, and had already reached the forest of Soignes ere they were recalled by assurances of the troops being checked.

On the other hand, some of the Dutch generals were so convinced of the desperate opposition awaiting them, that in the course of the afternoon General Trip addressed a report to Prince Frederick, in which he stated "that it would be impossible to obtain possession of the rest of the town, without successively besieging each quarter, and, indeed, each edifice; that general devastation and massacre must ensue; that, from the mode of defence adopted by the rebels, it would be necessary, in order to obtain victory, to sacrifice all the interests and prosperity of the royal residence; and, finally, that it was utterly useless to calculate on the co-operation of the burghers, who were held in a state of utter subjection by the revolutionists."

From this moment the attack lost all character of energy, and might be said to have been converted into a defence. Anxious to maintain his reputation for moderation and forbearance—forgetting that the hour of moderation was past, and that forbearance would now

* Subsequently appointed governor of South Brabant.

be mistaken for weakness—having neither the heart to advance, nor the moral courage to retreat, and being still loth to abandon the delusive hopes that were luring him on to destruction, Prince Frederick, counselled as it is affirmed by General Constant, determined to arrest the further progress of his troops, and, if possible, to open a negotiation with the chiefs of the people. Lieut.-colonel Gumoëns,* a gallant and distinguished soldier, was therefore ordered to proceed with a flag of truce, and having placed himself in communication with the revolutionary authorities, to request some of them to present themselves at the royal head-quarters, for the purpose of discussing the best and speediest means of putting a stop to further bloodshed. But Gumoëns had no sooner passed from beneath the protection of his own guns, than he was fiercely assailed by the drunken and infuriated populace; and, in despite of his sacred character, would probably have fallen a victim to their brutality, had not Mellinet and some other chiefs sprung forward, and rescued him from the hands of those desperate and lawless men. This violation of the usages of war was declared to be a reprisal for the seizure of Ducpetiaux; but the cases were widely different. It was not, however, until the expiration of two or three hours that Gumoëns was enabled to explain the object of his mission; and although the leaders appeared desirous to negotiate, and dispatched three delegates for this purpose, they were unable or unwilling to traverse the fire of the combatants, and the project fell to the ground.

Notwithstanding this failure, D' Hoogvorst and Baron F. de Coppin, accompanied by three or four influential

* This officer was mortally wounded during the siege of the citadel, (where he served as a volunteer) and died at Antwerp.

leaders, determined if possible to penetrate to the prince's presence. As soon as the night closed in, and the fire had commenced to slacken on both sides, these zealous and devoted citizens proceeded with a flag of truce to the head-quarters of the prince, established in a house near the Botanical Garden, and after a short parley, were admitted to the presence of his royal highness, whom they found sitting in counsel with Generals Constant and Trip. After exposing the true situation of the city, both moral and physical, D'Hoogvorst openly declared that the only conditions on which the prince could now hope for a truce, were, that he should instantly issue a short and unequivocal proclamation, announcing—"first, a general amnesty without *reserve* or *retrospect*;—secondly, an assurance of administrative separation, and thirdly, a promise that the troops should be withdrawn to the positions held by them prior to the 21st."

After a discussion that lasted until day-light, in fact until the tocsin again called the people to arms, the prince declared himself unauthorized to consent to any modifications of the original proclamation without reference to the Hague. D'Hoogvorst and his colleagues, therefore, returned into the city, and the struggle, or rather the siege of the royal troops, continued with redoubled ardour.*

Unfortunately, more than one of the same emissaries that had already misled Prince Frederick at Antwerp,

* It was not without feelings of extreme vexation that not only Prince Frederick and the Dutch generals, but D'Hoogvorst and Coppin, remarked the indecent conduct of one of the persons that accompanied them. This individual, not only forgetting what was due to the prince, but to common decency, threw himself into a chair, and then placing his *feet on the table*, gave his opinions in the most uncourteous and inappropriate language.

had again presented themselves, and contributed in counteracting the well-meant efforts of D'Hoogvorst and his coadjutors. They stated that the utmost anarchy existed in the lower part of the city, and that the upper portion was abandoned by its inhabitants; that all authority was destroyed; that even the voice of D'Hoogvorst had lost its influence; that, with the exception of an individual named Engelspach who had assumed the title of "General Agent," not a human being was to be seen at the Hôtel de Ville; that even the most desperate advocates of resistance were divided amongst themselves; that others, despairing of success, had fled the city; that, for the lack of a native officer capable of assuming the command, Van Halen, a Spanish refugee, had been chosen generalissimus; and that the remainder of the volunteer chiefs, gathered from all corners of the world, were disunited, unknown to each other, and, as the sequel proved, not altogether inaccessible to seduction.* They added, that the people were without ammunition, that the hospitals were crowded with wounded and dying, and that if the prince would give orders to his troops to cease firing, and thus remove all cause for continuing the struggle, the respectable citizens would then be enabled to re-assume their preponderance, and propose satisfactory terms.

Though much of this intelligence was founded on fact, these persons omitted to mention that the Liege volunteers under Rogier had returned, and that hundreds of others continued to pour into the city by the avenues that had been so imprudently left unobstructed at their own suggestion; that it had been resolved to establish a "provisional administrative commission," consisting of D'Hoogvorst, Rogier, and Jolly (a retired subaltern of engineers), with Baron F. de Coppin and Joseph Vander-

* This was partially verified by the subsequent conduct of Gregoire.

linden as secretaries, and that the enthusiasm of the lower orders amounted to frenzy; that many of the citizens who had at first taken no share in the defence, either irritated by the burning or plunder of their houses, or excited by example, had joined the populace; that in lieu of submission, shouts of victory and songs of triumph rent the air; that instant death would have awaited the "traitor" who dared to propose surrender; that several influential persons were scouring the country with a view of raising guerillas to act in the rear of the army; that Messrs. Gendebien and Van de Weyer, at the head of two or three hundred volunteers, had returned to the city on the 25th, bringing with them fourteen barrels of powder;* and that, in order still further to arouse the people, an unsigned proclamation had been affixed to the walls, announcing a victory gained over the royal troops by the Louvainists, and declaring (with unblushing falsehood) that Prince Frederick had promised to abandon the city to sack and pillage during two hours.

They might have added, that the sword having once been drawn, that civic blood having once flown, all further scruples on the part of the prince would be of no avail. The injury to the dynasty was almost irrevocable. The prince might advance, retreat, bombard, or patiently submit to see the *élite* of his troops decimated in the parks—no matter; nothing could restore the moral supremacy of the government. Indeed, another government had already superseded that of the crown, for most of the members of the "commission of surety" having returned on the 25th, they had met together and elected or resolved themselves into a provincial government, and announced their installation by proclamation on the forenoon of the 26th. † If, therefore, the prince seriously

* See Appendix, No. 16. † See Appendix, No. 17.

entertained a hope of regaining the city, half measures were useless. Nothing remained but to have recourse to all the rigours of war. He had only one of two plans to pursue, namely, either to withdraw his troops to the adjacent heights, to place them on position at half-gun shot—to throw up batteries, and thence menace to bombard the town, unless so many thousand stand of arms and a given number of hostages were sent to him at a prescribed hour; or, by closely investing all the avenues of the city, and preventing all egress or ingress, thus to reduce it to starvation.

It is not to be supposed that either of these infallible methods could have escaped the prince's attention. They had not—but, unfortunately for his cause, he constantly laboured under the fatal delusion, that negotiation was practicable. Besides, his heart revolted at the idea of employing the terrible power at his disposal, for his howitzers, which never fired a shot, would have sufficed to have reduced Brussels to ashes in a few hours. But if motives of humanity, not unmixed with considerations for the preservation of the royal palaces and property, prevented his adopting extreme measures, it is difficult to comprehend his motives for not selecting the less sanguinary, but not less certain, means of investment.

In the meantime the situation of the royal troops was most distressing. Hemmed in on every side; harassed by an incessant, plunging fire from the windows, roofs, and chimney-tops, which they could return with little effect; confined to the park and palaces, without orders to advance, or permission to retire, they were uselessly exposed during four days to all the demoralizing effects of their fatal and false position. They held the key of the city, but it lay rusting in their hands, or rather it was turned upon themselves. Night after night closed in, and not an inch was gained. Day after day dawned,

and Prince Frederick, turning his eye to St. Gudule, and vainly expecting to see the Orange banner floating from its towers, persisted in maintaining his ground, and pursuing the same ineffective and dangerous system. Though resolved to restrict himself to the defensive, he neglected the commonest precautions for the security of his people. Not a single attempt was made by day or night to obtain possession of any of the adjacent buildings whence his soldiers were so severely galled. Neither epaulements, trenches, or breastworks were thrown up to protect his skirmishers or artillerymen, who were compelled to employ the carcasses of their dead horses for this purpose. His brave gunners, though death was inevitable, manfully stood to their pieces in the open streets, and were killed one after another at pistol distance, until at length some of the guns ceased firing, having lost all their people, even to the last officer; and yet it is notorious that at nightfall the greater part of the defenders abandoned their posts—that scarcely a single sentinel remained near the barricades—that all firing ceased—and that a handful of resolute men, well led on, might at any moment have dashed forward, and carried all the adjacent edifices with the bayonet.*

Had the Dutch generals done their duty, this operation might have been effected on the first night. Working parties should also have been employed to throw up a

* It was during this period that the brave and lamented Lord Blantyre fell a victim to one of those hazards that so often ingloriously terminate the mortal career of the best and most distinguished. After escaping unscathed, but crowned with never-dying laurels, from fifty ensanguined battle-fields—after leading on his heroic Highlanders to as many victories as they had seen combats—after withdrawing to terminate a noble life in retirement, an honour to his country and his family, he fell by a chance shot, whilst looking through a window. What a picture of mortal nothingness!

strong breastwork at the angle of the park, opposite the Place Royale, and the morning of the 24th should have found the Dutch guns (of which only four were employed at one time in the park) sheltered behind a substantial parapet. The sandy ground was essentially favourable for such purpose; and if fascines or bags were not at hand, the mattresses from the palaces should have been employed. But the same want of prudence, the same disregard to the ordinary rules of war and self-preservation that dictated the attacks on the gates, when they might have been turned without the sacrifice of ten lives, pervaded all the subsequent operations, and combined to ensure victory to the people, and to entail defeat and disgrace on the royal arms.

It would be difficult to discover a position immediately contiguous to any large city that offered such facilities for attack without risk, as those that presented themselves to the selection of the Dutch general. From the gate of Louvain to that of Namur, extend a range of eminences that not only command the whole of the inner boulevards and adjacent streets at half-musket range, but which afford opportunities for cannonading the heart of the city, through the streets opening at right angles into the park, which is immediately contiguous. These eminences, forming a natural breast-work towards the city, and falling away in an easy slope towards the country, are admirably calculated to mask the movements of any number of troops. A couple of battalions and a dozen guns placed behind the shelter of this ground, themselves secure from all danger, might have covered the entry of the army, and maintained such a destructive plunging and enfilading fire on all the adjacent buildings and streets, as would have rendered it impossible for the besieged to stand for a moment. Under protection of this fire, an active working party might have

filled up the ditch in a few minutes, so as to admit the passage of any number of infantry and artillery; and, these having once crossed, the whole would have been instantly in the park—thus turning all the gates and barricades, without the necessity of forcing one or the other, or risking valuable lives in those murderous street-encounters, where discipline and tactic are of little avail; where the best and bravest are always the first victims, and where the advantage is invariably in favour of the defenders.

False attacks should, doubtless, have been made on all the gates, and working parties ordered to throw up batteries, ready in case of sorties. But it was a wanton waste of life to attempt carrying points so distant from the central object, when the boulevards opposite the prince's palace afforded such facilities for success. To persist in executing such a plan as that at first proposed, might have been excusable, as a mere demonstration to *feel the pulse of the citizens;* but to convert such demonstration into a real attack, when it was evident that a desperate resistance was resolved on, was against all the precepts of strategy and reason; for one of the first of these laws is to seek to inflict as much harm as possible on an adversary with the least possible loss to one's-self, and to force him, if possible, to combat on ground of your own selection. In the present instance, the Dutch reversed this important maxim, which was literally courting defeat, or, at all events, seeking victory by the most circuitous and sanguinary path.

It would be superfluous to follow the operations during the remainder of the struggle. Suffice it to say, that Prince Frederick not deeming it consistent with the interests of the crown to adopt either of the plans that would have ensured success, had no sooner received instructions from the Hague, than he issued orders for

the total evacuation of the city. Consequently, a little before midnight the battalions were withdrawn in silence from the parks and adjacent edifices, and, falling back in good order and without molestation, resumed the positions they had occupied on the 21st, and here remained two days. Continuing their retreat on the 29th, the head-quarters moved to Antwerp, the main body went into cantonments at Walhem, Duffel, Lierre, Boom, and other places on the Nethe and Rupel; and the Duke of Saxe Weimar having arrived at Malines, took the command of the rear-guard, and established his advanced posts at the village of Sempst on the Senne.

The loss of the assailants during these operations amounted, according to their own statement, to 138 killed, of whom 13 were officers; 650 wounded, of whom 38 were officers, including, Lieut.-General Constant, and Schuurman; and 163 missing, of whom 5 were officers, giving a total of 951.* The Belgian official report of casualties, fell little short of 1800, of whom 450 were killed or died immediately after, and 1250 wounded. Of these at least two-thirds on both sides were victims of the first day's assault. Thus terminated an expedition, which, had it been conducted with skill, promptitude, and energy, must have been attended with infallible success; but, being planned under the influence of the most fatal deception, executed almost in defiance of the rules of art, and persisted in, in opposition to all prudence, it terminated by an inexplicable and inglorious retreat, by the utter demoralization of a brave and well-appointed army, and by the complete ruin of the dynasty. All that was wanting to fill the measure of this tragedy of errors, was the bombardment of Antwerp. Until that sinister

* The Belgian accounts of the Dutch loss states the number of casualties as nearly double: it gives 520 killed, 630 wounded, and 450 missing.

and impolitic act took place, there was yet a chance, a possibility of success, not for the King, but for the Prince of Orange. But the flames of Antwerp destroyed the last vestige of the Orange banner, even to the very flag-staff.

Before bidding adieu to these operations, a word is necessary upon a subject of vital importance to the honour and reputation of the Dutch. Terrible have been the imputations of rapine and excess brought against them, and, for the most part, not less false than terrible. Prince Frederick was not only accused of encouraging pillage and massacre, but of a deficiency of personal courage. Now, as regards the first, his general orders are there to prove, that he adopted every means in his power to enforce discipline, and that it was impossible for any general to have exerted more earnest measures to prevent excess. As relates to the second, thousands were witnesses that he exposed himself much more than was deemed prudent by his attendants, and that he owed his life to the intervention of Providence, for, independent of casual danger, three times did a cowardly and concealed hand take premeditated and deliberate aim at his person. No! whatever failings or defects may be laid to the charge of the members of the house of Nassau, neither want of courage or humanity are amongst the number. Braver hearts never throbbed beneath a warrior's breastplate, nor hearts more generous or humane. They may lack some of the elements that are essential to great statesmen and commanders, but neither Ney, the bravest of the brave, nor Wellington, the coolest of all most undaunted soldiers, were more valiant or more contemptuous of peril.*

* Amongst other calumnies, it was affirmed that Prince Frederick had fled, disguised as a miller. An imputation so base scarcely merits refutation, for it was known to the whole of the army that his royal highness was the *last* person that quitted Brussels, in *rear* of the *rear-guard.*

The prince—for on him rested the responsibility—was further accused of hurling shells, rockets, and hot shot on the city. Now, it is indisputable that he had not a single Congreve with his army; that not one red shot or even carcase was employed; and although some of the shells directed against the barricades exceeded their range, and thence caused the destruction of the riding-house, the battery of howitzers retired without discharging a single projectile. That his royal highness might have bombarded the city, and that he refrained from so doing, is incontestible, and, speaking in a military and political sense, his leniency was a grievous error; for he suffered all the odium of bombarding and burning, without reaping any of its advantages. His forbearance, for such it was, being construed into a proof of weakness, injured his cause as a prince at home, and ruined his reputation as a soldier abroad. To attempt to deprive him, therefore, of the merit of forbearance, when by this very humanity he lost the monarchy, is too unjust. But, unfortunately, history does not reserve her brightest pages for those generals that carry this virtue beyond prudent bounds. Forbearance and humanity are admirable ingredients and accessories in the character of a commander—but they must be the result, not the prelude to battle. War and humanity are antithesises, so opposed to one another, that a general who does not sometimes forget that he has a heart, gives evident proofs that he has little head. In conflicts between nations a drawn battle may lead to peace; in civil struggles there can be no medium. Either the people or the government must obtain the supremacy; the sword once drawn, there can be no half measures. What instance does history afford of forbearance on the part of the people, so long as the struggle lasted? The prince or general that expects to

overcome overt revolt with such weapons, shows that he knows little of the history of revolutions, or of the character of the people.

That most reprehensible excesses were committed, there can be no doubt; but, however lamentable such outrages may have been, every person practically conversant with the fearful hazards of war must be well aware that these excesses are the inevitable concomitants of almost all assaults. Such persons will admit, that if there be an occasion on which officers may be held excusable for the misconduct of their men, it is during those terrible moments when troops make good a forcible entry into a city, and when the fury of the assailants naturally rise in proportion to the vigour of the defence. Heated by the rage of street-combat, by the fall of their dying comrades, in short, by all the indescribable excitements of combat, soldiers are then no longer masters of their passions, but abandoning themselves to the drunkenness of revenge, added to that of liquor, turn deaf to the calls of discipline and humanity, and do not pause to distinguish the innocent from the guilty—if, indeed, there be any guilt in defending one's household gods to the last gasp.

But after rejecting, as mere fables, the greater part of the odious reports of violation, rapine, cold-blooded assassination of the living, and wanton mutilation of the dead—reports purposely propagated in order to inflame the popular hatred against the Dutch, especially in the provinces—and admitting that much outrage did occur, Belgian historians should be cautious how they dwell on this subject; for, as two-thirds of the troops employed were natives of the southern provinces, no sophistry can screen them from their full participation in the odium. It has been asserted that the 9th and

10th regiments, recruited at the Hague and Amsterdam, and the punishment battalion (*straaf bataillon*), composed of defaulters and loose characters, were the principal actors; but this argument will not hold good, for the reported outrages were not confined to the streets occupied by these corps. Each corner, each alley, had its tale of horror, which passed exaggerated and distorted from mouth to mouth, and found ready credence with a people, whose animosity against the Dutch was roused to madness by the sight of their bleeding relatives and burning property. And yet a large portion of these acts of incendiarism were the undoubted work of the people themselves.*

But it is time to bid adieu to these fatal transactions. On the 27th of September, Brussels, from being a scene of the wildest confusion and terror, was suddenly converted into a theatre of the most unbounded exultation. Yells, shouts, pæans of victory resounded from its remotest allies. The mournful booming of the tocsin, that during four days had called the people to arms, now swelled into a peal of rejoicing, bidding them repose in safety. The fugitives that had sought security in the provinces returned to their abodes. All peril being past, De Potter, the ephemeral demi-god of popular adoration, prepared to return home to enjoy the first honours of the ovation. The incredible intelligence of the discomfiture of the royal legions, with all its exaggerated accompaniments, was conveyed with lightning-speed to the provinces, where the canker of disaffection and demoralization spread like wild-fire through all ranks and classes. That which yesterday was a mere disjointed local revolt,

* Witness the burning of the house of Mr. Meeus, of the Hôtel Torrington, of the edifices near the palace, and others.

now rode triumphant, on the blood-stained bayonets of the populace, a robust and general revolution. The nation was triumphant beyond its most sanguine hopes. The victory was essentially popular, for it was the undivided work of the people—gained, as they gain their daily bread, by the sweat of their brow, or rather by that of their blood. The fabric raised at so much cost and labour by the Congress of Vienna, stood tottering upon the brink of a precipice. Europe looked on aghast and wept, but not a hand dared move to prop the crumbling edifice. The force of events, more powerful than the will of cabinets, pronounced the fiat of destruction, and set defiance to alliances. The doom of the dynasty was sealed.

END OF VOL. I.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.*—PROCLAMATION.

The Burgher Master, &c. &c. &c., to their Fellow-Citizens.

The troops have been requested to withdraw to their barracks, they have ceased to interfere in this deplorable struggle. The *mouture* tax is suppressed from this day ;† it will not be replaced by any other of a similar nature, under any denomination whatever. If any legitimate demand remains to be made, let it be addressed to us ; we will unite our efforts to those of all good citizens to obtain its full accomplishment. But these measures must be ineffectual, if tranquillity be not restored. Disorder and bloodshed, by plunging families into mourning, can only generate mischief.

Hôtel de Ville, 26th August 1330.

No. 2.—PROCLAMATION.

Inhabitants of Brussels!—Reports having been spread that troops were marching upon Brussels, the commandant of the burgher-guards hastens to inform you, that orders have been issued by the military authorities to prevent their entering the town, and to command them to halt. The safety of the city therefore remains exclusively confided to the brave burgher-guard, which has so well fulfilled its duty. A deputation of

* All these documents have been curtailed in the translation, as far as the strength and essence would allow.

† This was the municipal tax, which had been continued after that of the government had been abolished.

notables is about to proceed to the Hague. Until their return, the troops stationed in the upper town will remain inactive. The officers commanding the burgher-guard have engaged on honour to respect their neutrality.

(Signed) D'HOOGVORST.

Brussels, 28th August 1830. &c. &c. &c.

No. 3.—PROCLAMATION.

We, Major General Bylandt, &c. &c., in concert with the other military authorities, hereby make known, that we have agreed that the troops, expected this day, shall *not enter* the city, so long as the inhabitants respect all the civil and military authorities, therein established, and maintain that good order which the chiefs of the burghers have engaged to preserve.

(Signed) COUNT DE BYLANDT.

Head Quarters, Brussels, 28th Aug. 1830. &c. &c. &c.

No. 4.—ADDRESS TO THE KING.

Sire!—The undersigned, your respectful and faithful subjects, take the liberty, in the difficult circumstances under which Brussels and other towns are placed, to depute to your majesty five of their fellow-citizens, charged to declare to your majesty that never, under similar circumstances, were the good inhabitants more deserving of your esteem and the gratitude of the public. By their firmness and courage they have, in three days, calmed the most dangerous effervescence, and terminated the gravest disorders. But, Sire! they cannot conceal from your majesty that the general discontent is most profoundedly rooted. The effects of the policy of ministers who pay no regard to our vows or wants are universally felt. Although masters of the movement, at this moment, the good citizens cannnot answer that they themselves may not become the victims of their efforts, if the nation be not appeased. They implore you, therefore, Sire, by all those generous sentiments that animate your heart, to listen to their voices, and to put an end to their just complaints. Full of confidence in the goodness and justice of your majesty, they have deputed their fellow-citizens to you, in the sole hope that they may obtain the gratifying assurance, that the evils o which they complain will be speedily redressed. The under-

signed feel convinced that one of the best means of effecting this desirable object will be the immediate convocation of the States-General.

(Signed) D'HOOGVORST,
Brussels, 28th Aug. 1830. and about forty others.

No. 5.—PROCLAMATION.*

We, William, Prince, &c. &c.—Having arrived in this city, according to his majesty's command, in order to consult as to the best means of contributing to the good that may be effected in this part of the Netherlands kingdom, it is right that we should commence by expressing, in his majesty's name, the satisfaction he has derived from the union and success with which the people of Antwerp have maintained that order and tranquillity which a few vagabonds and strangers sought to disturb. After this first expresion of the sentiments that have animated us since we have found ourselves in the midst of so many functionaries, merchants, and fathers of families, all equally admirable for their devotion, and equally interested in the maintenance of the tranquillity which we enjoy here, we have turned our attention to the best means of diminishing for them those (military) fatigues that are ill repaid by the short repose which they are enabled to take, when commercial and other duties absorb every moment of the day. It has therefore been extremely agreeable to us to conciliate the measures necessary for the safety of the fortress, with those which are permitted to us, from our confidence in the citizens. We therefore ordain, 1st, the measures to be concerted between the general commanding the fourth military division, and the local and civil authorities of Antwerp, shall be laid before an extraordinary commission. 2dly, Lieutenant General Chassé, &c. &c. are appointed members. 3rdly, the object to be discussed will be proposed by Lieutenant General Chassé, who, under circumstances demanding dispatch, may take upon himself the responsibility of executing any indispensable measure.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.
FREDERICK, Prince, &c.

Antwerp, 30th Aug. 1830.

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* The spirit and sense has been maintained as far as possible; but the original is so diffuse and vague, as fully to justify the observations made upon it in the text.

No. 6.—PROCLAMATION.

INHABITANTS of Brussels!—I have placed myself with the utmost confidence in the midst of you. My security is complete, guaranteed as it is by your loyalty. It is to your exertions that the re-establishment of order is due. I rejoice in acknowledging and thanking you for it in the king's name. Unite with me in consolidating tranquillity. Then no troops shall enter the city. In concert with the authorities, I will take the necessary measures for restoring calm and confidence. A commission, composed of the Dukes d'Ahremberg, d'Ursel, &c. &c., is directed to propose new measures to me. It will assemble to-morrow morning at my palace.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Brussels, 1st Sept. 1830.

No. 7.—PROCLAMATION.

OUR DEAR COMPATRIOTS!—We, the undersigned, deputies to the States-General, actually in Brussels, have been summoned by His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange. We have had the honour of exposing conscientiously to him the state of affairs and opinions. We consider ourselves authorized to represent to the prince royal, that the most ardent vow of Belgium was a complete separation between the southern and northern provinces, without any other point of contact than the reigning dynasty. We also represented to his royal highness, that notwithstanding the fever of the public mind, the Nassau dynasty has not ceased for a moment to be the unanimous vow of Belgium, and that the difficulties of its situation, the impossibility of conciliating irreconcilable opinions, customs, and interests being at an end, the House of Orange, free to identify itself with our wishes, might calculate on the attachment and fidelity of all. Our representations, combined with those of several special (provincial) deputations, have been favourably received; and already his roya highness has departed to convey in person, to his august father the expression of our desires.

(Signed by eight Members of the States.)

Brussels, 3d Sept. 1830.

No. 8.—PROCLAMATION.

INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS!—His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange has offered to proceed immediately to the Hague, in order to present our demands in person to his majesty. He will support them with all his influence, and he has every reason to hope they will be granted. The moment after his departure, the troops will evacuate Brussels. The burgher-guards engages, *on its honour*, not to suffer any change of dynasty, and to protect the town, and, above all, the palaces.

(*Signed by twenty-two chiefs of the burgher-guard, the prince's aides-de-camp, and other Dutch officers.*)

(Counter-signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Brussels, 3d September, 1830.

No. 9.—PROCLAMATION.

CITIZENS OF BRUSSELS!—In conformity with an arrangement concluded between his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange, and the chiefs of the burgher-guard, the military detachment stationed at the palace has just quitted our walls. Every true Belgian will comprehend the duty of respecting, as concerns the troops, the sacred engagement which has been contracted this day—the execution of which is confided to national honour. The prince has declared, that he will lay before his august father the expression of our unanimous vow for a separation between the two portions of the kingdom, in all matters legislative, administrative, and financial. The Liege deputation has declared that the inhabitants of that city are ready to place at the disposal of their Brussels brethren any assistance of men, arms, and ammunition, that may be required. Fellow-citizens! such is the present state of affairs. Let us be calm, for we are strong; and let us continue united, in order to maintain and augment our force.

(Signed) BARON VAN DER SMISSEN.

Brussels, 3d September, 1830.

No. 10.—TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE NETHERLANDS.

SIRE!—It is not without painful sensations that we have been apprized of the demand made to your majesty, tending to obtain a separation of interests between the southern and northern provinces. The fear that our silence may be interpreted as an adhesion to this proposition, imposes upon us the duty of exposing to your majesty that this vow is in no way participated by us. The experience of fifteen years has proved to us, in the most evident manner, that it is to the free and mutual exchange of produce that we are indebted for reciprocal prosperity. The advantages that navigation derives from the colonies, the increasing issues (*debouchés*) that these same colonies constantly offer to our industry are irrefragable proofs that any separation would not only be fatal to this province, but to the commerce and industry of all Belgium. Intimately persuaded of this great truth, we dare to make it known to your majesty with that confidence and respect inspired by a king who desires the welfare of his people, and who will never labour but in the interest of its well-understood prosperity.

Antwerp, 13th Sept. 1830.

No. 11.—ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE NETHERLANDS, &c. &c.

SIRE!—The Council of Regency of the town of Brussels,* assembled in permanent sitting, having examined the causes of the extraordinary movements that agitate this city and Belgium, is convinced that they have their source in the desire to see established a separation between the northern and southern provinces.

It adheres completely to the vows of the Belgians that have been transmitted to you, Sire, by his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange.

It supplicates your majesty to accept them, and to be intimately convinced that the maintenance of the Nassau dynasty has never ceased for an instant to be its desire, as well as that of the generality of inhabitants of this residence.

Brussels, 4th Sept. 1830.

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* Consisting of the mayor, four aldermen (*échevins*), twenty-five common-councillors, and a secretary.

No. 12.—PROCLAMATION.

We, William, by the grace of God, &c.—To all whom it may concern, &c.

Divine Providence, which has deigned to accord to this kingdom fifteen years of peace with all Europe, internal order, and increasing prosperity, has afflicted two provinces with numberless calamities; and the repose of several others has either been troubled or menaced.

On the first intelligence of these disasters, we hastened to convoke, extraordinarily, the States-General, which, according to the letter of the fundamental law, represents the whole Belgian people, in order to advise, in concert with their high mightinesses, as to the measures reclaimed by actual circumstances and the state of the nation.

At the same time, our well-beloved sons, the Prince of Orange and the Prince Frederic of the Netherlands, were charged by us to proceed to these provinces, as much to protect, with the forces placed at their disposal, persons and property, as to assure themselves of the real state of affairs, and to propose to us such measures as were best adapted to soothe the public mind.

This mission, executed with a degree of humanity and generosity that the nation will appreciate, has confirmed to us the assurance, that even there, where agitation is most intense, the nation preserves and proclaims attachment to our dynasty and to national independence; and, however painful the circumstances that have come to our knowledge may be to our heart, we do not abandon the hope that, with the aid of Divine Providence, whose succour we implore in this grave and solemn occasion, and by the assistance of all well-disposed persons and good citizens in different parts of the kingdom, we shall succeed in restoring order and re-establishing the action of legal power and the dominion of the laws.

We rely for this issue on the concurrency of the States-General. We invite them to examine whether the evils that afflict the country are the result of certain vices in the national institutions, and whether there is ground for modifying them, and principally whether the relations established between the two grand divisions of the kingdom, by treaties and the fundamental law, ought, for the common good, to change their form and nature.

We desire that these important questions should be examined with care and with unrestrained liberty. No sacrifice will be too great for our hearts when there is a question of fulfilling the desires and assuring the happiness of a people, whose felicity has been the subject of our most constant and assiduous attention.

But though disposed to contribute with frankness and loyalty, and by broad and decisive measures, to the safety of the country, we are not less resolved to maintain with constancy the legitimate rights of all parts of the kingdom, without distinction, and only to proceed by regular means, in conformity with the oaths taken and received by us.

Belgians!—Inhabitants of the diverse portions of that beautiful land that has more than once been rescued by heavenly favour and the union of its citizens from the calamities to which it was abandoned!—await with calm and confidence the solution of the important questions which circumstances have produced. Second the efforts of the authorities to maintain internal order and the action of the laws, where they have not been troubled, and in re-establishing them where they have been disturbed.

Lend assistance to the law, in order that in its turn the law may protect your properties and personal safety. Let all distinction of opinions disappear before the augmenting dangers of that anarchy which in several places presents itself under the most hideous forms; and which, if it is not anticipated or repulsed by the means that the fundamental law has placed at the disposal of the government, will inflict irreparable injury upon individual welfare and national prosperity. Let all good citizens separate their cause from that of the agitators, and let their generous efforts for the re-establishment of public tranquillity place a term to these immense evils, and permit us to efface, if possible, even the very trace.

(Signed) WILLIAM.
DE MEY DE STREEFKERK.

Done at the Hague, the 5th of September 1830,
and of our reign the seventeenth.

No. 13.—PROCLAMATION.

Inhabitants of Brussels!—A *Commission of Public Surety* has been installed. We hereby bring to your knowledge the official document that constitutes it.

The Council of Regency assembled in permanent sitting, in naming the Commission of Public Surety, thought that it ought to adhere to the very terms which it had employed in the proclamation, in which it manifested a desire for a separation between the north and south. However, in consequence of observations made to it by the commission, the council thinks that, whilst it persists in maintaining the vows it has expressed, it cannot nevertheless, change the terms of its original mandate.

Consequently, due regard being had to circumstances, the council has adopted the accompanying resolution; namely,

"To concur in the formation of a *Commission of Public Surety* for the city of Brussels, charged,

"*a.* To assure the maintenance of the dynasty.

"*b.* To maintain the principle of separation of the north and the south.

"*c.* And finally, to take measures necessary for the interests of commerce, industry, and public order."

In order to effect the establishment and entrance into office of this commission, the council gives its suffrage to the eight following persons:

Mr. Rouppe, the Duke d'Ursel, Gendebien, the Prince de Ligne, Frederic de Sécus, Van de Weyer, Count Felix de Merode, and Ferdinand Méeus.

(Signed) DELVAU DE SAIVE.

Hôtel de Ville of Brussels, 11th of September 1830.

No. 14.—THE KING'S SPEECH.

NOBLE AND PUISSANT SIRS!—Deplorable events have rendered urgent the extraordinary assembly of your high mightinesses, which opens this day.

In peace and amity with all the people of this portion of the globe, the Netherlands witnessed the fortunate termination of the war in her trans-marine possessions. Order, commerce, and industry—every thing prospered in repose. I occupied myself incessantly with endeavours to diminish the burthens of the people, and to gradually introduce into the internal administration such ameliorations as experience pointed out; when, suddenly at Brussels, and after this example in certain other parts of the kingdom, an insurrection broke forth characterized by scenes of incendiarism and pillage, of which the description

would be too painful for this assembly, for my heart, for national honour, and for humanity.

Awaiting the concurrence of your high mightinesses, whose convocation was my first thought, every measure was immediately adopted, that depended upon me, to arrest the progress of the evil, to protect the well-thinking against the evil-minded, and to avert from the country the curse of civil war.

To revert to the nature and source of what has passed, and to demonstrate to your high mightinesses the object and consequences, is less necessary for the interest of the country, at the present moment, than to seek for the means by which repose, order, authority, and law can be re-established not only temporally, but guaranteed for the future in a more durable manner.

In the meanwhile, Noble and Puissant Sirs, from the struggle of opinions, the agitation of passions, and the discordance of views and projects, it is a highly difficult task to conciliate my wishes for the happiness of my subjects with the duties I have contracted towards you.

For this reason, I invoke your wisdom, your moderation, and your firmness to concert (with the sanction of the national representatives, and by general assent) whatever may be most necessary under these afflicting circumstances for the welfare of the Netherlands.

It is thought in many quarters that the safety of the state would be secured by a revision of the fundamental law, and even by a separation of the countries united by treaties and by this very law.

But such a demand can only be submitted to deliberation, according to the route traced out by that act, of which all the clauses have been solemnly sworn to by us.

This important demand will be the principal object of your deliberations.

I desire to know, regarding this point, the opinion and views of your assembly, which will pronounce them with that frankness and calmness which the importance of the question so urgently calls for. For my part, desiring above all things the happiness of the Netherlands, whose interests Divine Providence has confided to my care, I am ready to co-operate with your assembly in the measures that may lead to this object.

This extraordinary session has for its ulterior object to make known to your high mightinesses that the interests of the king-

dom, in the midst of these serious circumstances, imperiously demand the enrolment of the national militia beyond the period prescribed for the ordinary training.

The actual credits may suffice, for the present, for the expenses of this prolonged enrolment of the militia, as well as for other expenses necessarily resulting from the revolt. However, the ulterior regulation of these expenses ought to become the object of your deliberations during the approaching ordinary session.*

Noble and Puissant Sirs!—I trust to your fidelity and patriotism.

Calling to mind the revolutionary storms that have already thundered above my head, I shall as little forget the courage, the love and fidelity that overthrew despotism, founded national existence, and placed the sceptre in my hands, as the valour which, on the field of battle, strengthened the throne and assured the independence of the country.

Fully prepared to anticipate equitable desires, I will never yield to the spirit of faction, nor ever consent to measures that might sacrifice the welfare and interests of the country to passion and violence.

The vow of my heart is to conciliate as much as possible all interests.

ROYAL MESSAGE.

Noble and Puissant Sirs!—In consequence of what we have made known to you on opening your extraordinary session, and previously to all the Netherlands by our proclamation of the 5th instant, — — desire that your high mightinesses may immediately take into regular and attentive consideration the two following points:—

1st. Whether experience indicates the necessity of modifying our national institutions.

2nd. If, in this case, it is necessary, for the interest of the common weal, to change the connexion which is established by treaties and the fundamental law, between the two grand divisions of the kingdom.

It will be agreeable to us to receive, as early as the nature of things will permit, the free and undisguised communication of

* The ordinary session would have commenced on the third Monday in October of the same year.

the sentiments of the representatives of the Netherlands people on these important questions, in order to concert with your high mightinesses, according to circumstances, on the measures that may lead to the accomplishment of our intentions.

And we pray God, &c. &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

The Hague, 13th September, 1830.

No. 15.—PROCLAMATION.

We, Frederick, Prince of the Netherlands, &c.—To the Inhabitants of Brussels.

Brusselers!—The king, our august father, is engaged in concert with the representatives of the nation, and in the only manner compatible with their oaths, in attentively examining the wishes put forth by you.

Nevertheless, tranquillity is constantly troubled within your walls. Whilst with a zeal and activity worthy of the greatest praise, you are watching to defend public and private property, a small number of factious, hidden amongst you, excite the populace to pillage, the people to revolt, and the army to dishonour; the royal intentions are prevented, the authorities are without force, and liberty is oppressed.

In conformity with the king's orders, we are come to re-establish legal order, which is the only true and efficacious remedy for a state of things that ruins your city, and renders more and more distant the possibility of this royal residence being the abode of the monarch and the heir to the throne.

The national legions are about to enter your walls, in the name of the laws, and at the request of the best citizens, in order to relieve them all from a disagreeable duty, and to lend them aid and protection.

These officers, these soldiers, united under the standard of honour and their country, are your fellow-citizens, your friends, your brothers. They do not bring with them reaction or vengeance, but order and repose. A generous oblivion will be extended to the faults and irregularities that circumstances have produced.

The principal authors of acts, too criminal to hope to escape the severity of the laws—those strangers, who, abusing hospi-

tality, have come to organize disorder amongst you—shall alone be justly smitten; their cause has nothing in common with yours.

Consequently, in virtue of the powers intrusted to us, we have ordained and do ordain the following:—

Art. I.—The national troops shall enter Brussels.

Art. II.—All obstacles to their march shall be removed by the exertions of the municipal authority of the urban guard, of the commission of surety, and of all good inhabitants.

Art. III.—The posts of the urban guard shall be successively given up to the national troops. We will decide hereafter upon the mode of duty for the said guard.

Art. IV.—Armed individuals, strangers to the city, shall withdraw without arms to their own houses. All armed bands belonging to other districts (communes) who may come to Brussels, shall be invited to retire, and, if necessary, be dissipated by force.

Art. V.—The colours adopted, as distinctive emblems by a part of the urban guards, shall be deposed. We shall reserve to ourselves to determine the rallying symbol that it shall be authorized to carry.

Art. VI.—The municipal administration, the commission of safety, the council and chiefs of the urban guard, shall look both to the execution of the preceding arrangements, as well as to the maintenance of order, until the troops have effected their entry.

Art. VII.—The members of these corps are declared personally responsible, from the date of the present notification, for any resistance that may be offered to the public force; as well as for the illegal employment of the public, or municipal money, arms or ammunition.

Art. VIII.—The garrison shall, as soon as possible, be barracked or camped, so as not to be a burthen to the inhabitants: it will observe the strictest discipline. All violence shall be repulsed by force of arms; and such individuals culpable of resistance, as may fall into the hands of the public force, shall be delivered over to the competent judges, to be prosecuted criminally.

(Signed) FREDERICK,
Prince of the Netherlands.

Done at our Head-Quarters of Antwerp,
this 21st September, 1830.

No. 16.

THE following "*Appeal to the People*," drawn up at Valenciennes, was distributed in various provincial towns on the 24th and 25th.

"To arms! to arms! to arms! brave Belgians! The Dutch have dared to attack Brussels! The people have annihilated them. Fresh troops may attempt a second attack. We conjure you, in the name of our country, of honour and liberty, to fly to the succour of the brave Brusselers!

(Signed) "F. DE MÉRODE,
"S. VAN DE WEYER,
"A. GENDEBIEN,
"MOYARD, &c. &c."

No. 17.—PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

SEEING the absence of all authority, as well in Brussels as in the greater part of the towns and districts in Belgium; considering that, under actual circumstances, a general centre of operations is the only means of overcoming our enemies, and insuring triumph to the cause of the Belgian people;

The provisional government declares itself constituted after the following manner:—

Messrs. the Baron Vanderlinden d'Hoogvorst; Charles Rogier; Count Felix de Mérode; Gendebien; S. Van de Weyer; Jolly.—J. Vanderlinden, Treasurer; Baron F. de Coppin, and J. Nicolay, Secretaries.

Brussels, 26th September, 1830.

BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

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